

NEWS: THE ARMOURY / 8 • FILM: *THE ILLUSIONIST* / 39 • MUSIC: RUN CHICO RUN / 53

EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

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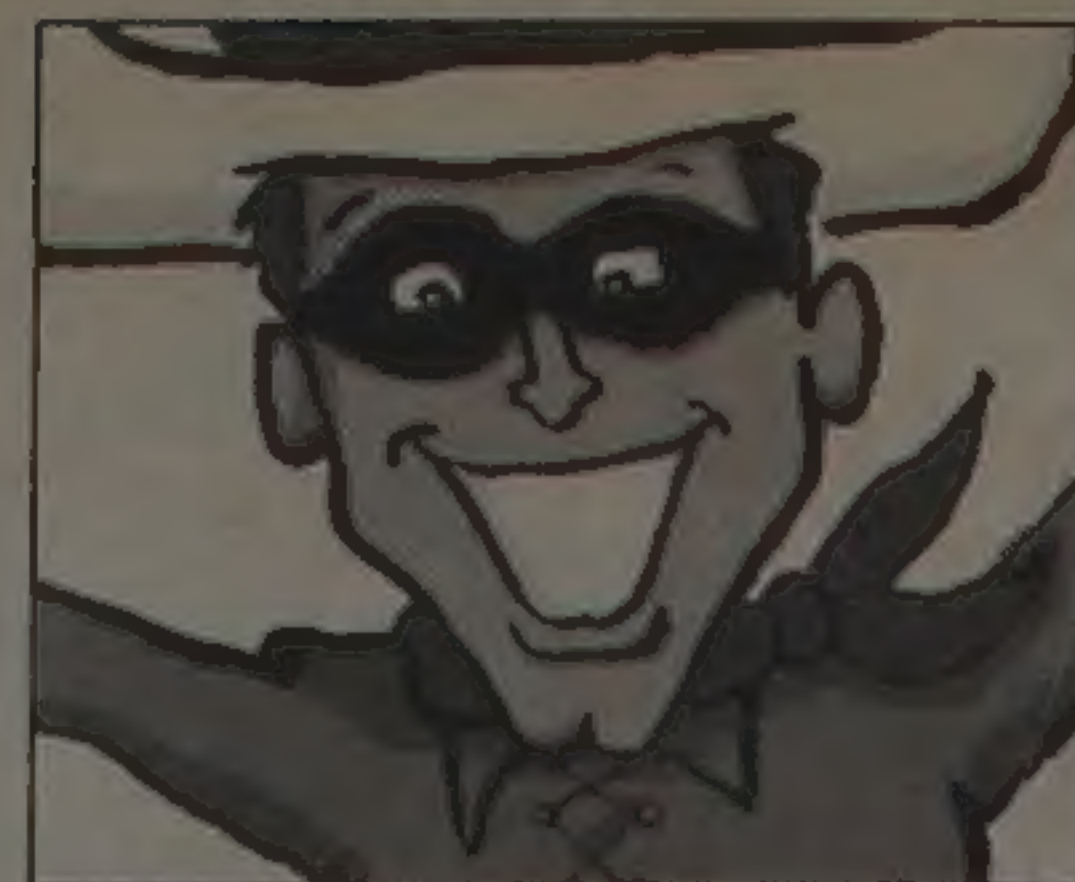
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ON THE COVER



FRINGE / 31

"As soon as I typed the words 'gay nazi musical' into Google, I knew I had a good Fringe play." —Darren Hagen, playwright/guy in disguise

NEWS



WHYTE AVENUE EYESORE / 7

"We don't have any ability to do anything to try to make them do this more quickly or anything along those lines; other governments have jurisdiction over environmental cleanups." —Michael Phair, Ward 4 city councillor

FILM



THE ILLUSIONIST / 39

"[Neil Burger's] helmed a seductive period romance shot in rich, shadowy browns, invoking a world where crowds huddle together in dimly lit theatres to witness miracles or at least be expertly tricked." —Josef Braun, *Vue* film reviewer

MUSIC



RUN CHICO RUN / 53

"Sometimes when we're writing a song we'll ask 'Who's gonna even like this?' but we both like it. We're just truckin' our freak flag up a pole and seeing who salutes it—and if nobody does, at least it's a sweet flag." —Thomas Shields, Run Chico Run

Spot the typo!

We're not especially good spellers, as some of you are fond of pointing out, so we can pretty much guarantee that there's a typo, grammatical error or some other boo-boo in this issue. The first several people (rather arbitrarily chosen) to send an e-mail to carolyn@vueweekly.com detailing such a find win their pick from the astoundingly horrible pile of CDs in our offices. And we're losing the battle—our pile is closing in on 400. Help!

Last week, in a stunning display of incompetence, we managed to put a typo in the typo section, and a few of you pointed that it should have been "in your sights," as opposed to "you sights." We also had people landing "as" McGill, used "about" with reckless abandon and ate a very satisfying desert. Don't blame us, though: we weren't feeling wel.

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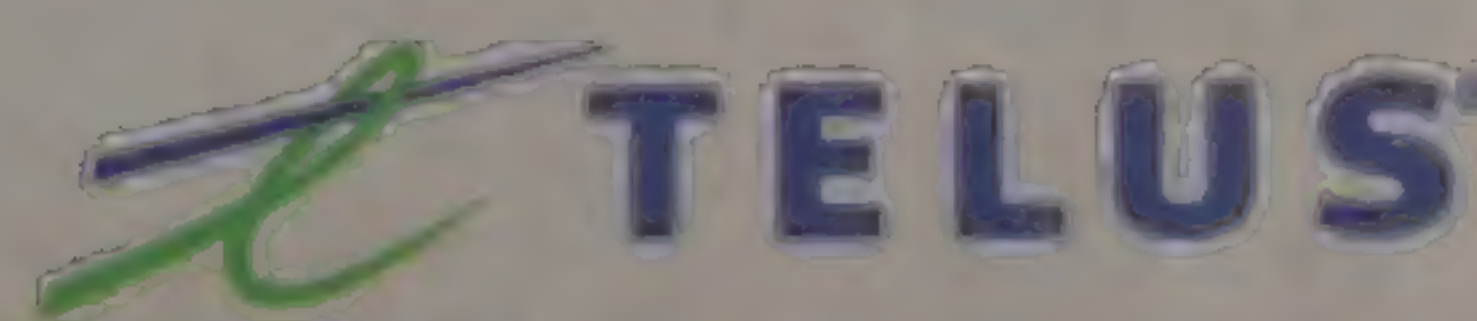
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Fighting AIDS and poverty

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com

In the lead-up to the Aug 13 - 18 XVI International AIDS Conference in Toronto, UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa Stephen Lewis, along with the Global Access Treatment Group and the Make Poverty History Campaign, called on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to undertake four steps to help stem the tide of HIV/AIDS in the developing world.

They challenged the Canadian government to set a binding timetable to bring official development assistance up to 0.7 per cent of gross national income and make significant contributions to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria; invest in the public health care systems of developing countries and find alternatives to taking health professionals from them; push for the immediate and unconditional cancellation of all debt owed by countries burdened by AIDS, debt and poverty; and follow through on promises to make affordable generic medicines available to developing countries.

While much of the media coverage of the conference has focused on the star power of actors, photogenic ex-presidents and a big-hearted billionaire (to say nothing of the inexcusable absence of the prime minister of the host country due to a "scheduling conflict"), Lewis' demands make a simple fact abundantly clear: AIDS and poverty go hand in hand, and the only way to take action on AIDS is for rich countries to start fulfilling their longstanding promises to take real action on global poverty.

The four demands also point to the contribution to the AIDS pandemic made by flawed and destructive neoliberal policies that Canada and the rest of the G8 have been foisting on the developing world—through institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization—for decades.

Through demanding the repayment of odious debts whose interest payments far outstrip aid, promoting the expansion of free trade agreements which give more weight to the rights of patent holders than to dying people, and forced structural adjustment policies that have compelled developing nations to devastate their public services and sell them off to transnational corporations, the rich countries of the world have much to answer for.

Lewis' call to action will be of immeasurable help in the fight against the AIDS pandemic, as well as a first step in building a more equitable international framework. We should all demand that Harper answers the call. ▼

A CEASE FIRE...

We ran out of women and children...



MAIL LETTERS

THANKS, THANKS, THANKS

Thank you for printing your Well, Well, Well column. As a human resources manager, I find that people are becoming disillusioned with the current medical model when it comes to their own health. They are beginning to look seriously at various preventative health measures. Unfortunately only the rich and desperate can afford them—isn't that privatization?

Nevertheless, I do my part and post the column on my bulletin board as reference material when staff find themselves in need. It's good to have someone willing to do the research and give us as balanced a view as I assume is possible given the abundance of information that is available for sifting through.

Thanks again for writing!

DEBBIE BERG

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (Vue Weekly, 10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by e-mail (letters@vueweekly.com). Preference is given to feedback about articles in Vue Weekly. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

I wonder if he's set up his MySpace yet

ROSS MOROZ / ross@vueweekly.com

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad—rabid America-hater, staunch Holocaust-denier, and aspiring nuclear tyrant—has started his own personal blog.

No, seriously: www.ahmadinejad.ir was launched on Aug 14, and is now available in Persian, Arabic, French and English.

State television has been encouraging Iranians to visit the blog and send messages to Ahmadinejad, and traffic appears to be brisk: as *Vue* goes to press, over 220 000 votes have been cast in the blog's inaugural poll, which asks "Do you think that the US and Israeli intention and goal by attacking Lebanon is pulling the trigger for another world war?" (Somewhat surprisingly, both "yes" and "no" are available as options.)

In his first and so far only entry—a rambling 2 000-word composition entitled simply "autobiography"—Ahmadinejad shares his thoughts on topics as varied as his childhood, the Iran-Iraq war and, of course, the "great Satan USA."



NEWS INTERNET

The entry ends with Ahmadinejad assuring readers that he will "continue this topic later on as it took long in the beginning" and promising that "from now onwards, I will try to make it shorter and simpler."

Blogging is already popular in Iran among anti-government dissidents, although the government employs one of the world's most technologically advanced Internet censorship systems in the world to try to suppress dissent. ▼

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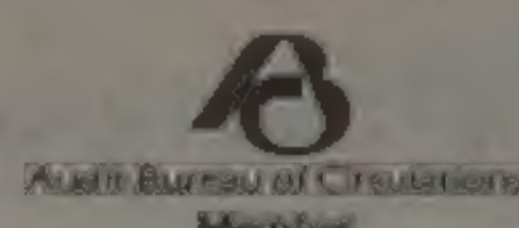
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Long, slow clean-up continues for Whyte Avenue 'eyesore'

SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT YEARS AWAY FOR 'BIG, EMPTY SPACE THAT NO ONE WANTS TO COME TO'

ROSS MOROZ / ross@vuwweekly.com

As the 2006 edition of Edmonton's long-running Fringe Theatre Festival begins this weekend, Old Strathcona's already-bustling Whyte Avenue will be even more densely crowded than usual with window shoppers and people watchers, many of whom don't typically visit the area on a regular basis.

The boulevard's well-preserved heritage buildings and funky boutiques will likely impress first-time visitors, but the newcomers may be a little perplexed by the half-block of seemingly prime real estate on the southeast corner of Whyte and 105th Street that is conspicuously fenced off and empty—that is, save for a small, industrial-looking building, a few plastic pipes sticking out of the ground and the odd sign discouraging trespassing.

Day trippers may assume the piece of land is simply a vacant lot, but area residents and business owners familiar with the property's history see the site as an eyesore and an environmental disaster area, and many of them are wondering why the company that owns the lot has been allowed to leave the site in its current state.

"If you look at Whyte Avenue, on my side of the street there's a big, empty space that no one wants to come to," says Mark Frost, owner of clothing store Divine, which has been in its current location in the basement of a building directly adjacent to the site since 1989. "On the other side of the street there's no big empty space, so if you look at foot traffic alone, there's generally a lot more foot traffic on the north side of the street, so certainly that negatively affects my business."

"I would be really, really happy if they were able to develop that particular space," he continues, "even to the point where, if I had competition right next door to me, I'd still be happier than I am right now."

"Everyone wishes that something would be developed there—I don't think anyone's happy with it," agrees councillor Michael Phair, whose ward 4 constituency includes Old Strathcona. "Unfortunately, though, there's not much that we can do."

WITH THE EXCEPTION of the June 2006 replacement of the fence surrounding the site, the contentious piece of land hasn't changed much since 1998,



NEWS ENVIRONMENT

when the lot's owner, Imperial Oil, shut down and removed the Esso gas station that had occupied the property for over 70 years. While in the process of decommissioning the site, the company discovered that the station's underground holding tanks, which were made of metal and were by then nearly three-quarters-of-a-century old, had been leaking gasoline into the surrounding soil for years.

"We did an environmental assessment [at that time] which indicated that some hydrocarbons had impacted soil both on the site and somewhat off the site as well," explains Imperial Oil spokesperson Pius Rolheiser. "Subsequent to that we developed a remediation plan ... and we're currently in the process of carrying that out."

This plan led to the installation of what Rolheiser called a "vapour recovery system," which consists of an electric pump that constantly circulates air through a network of plastic pipes dug into the contaminated ground, the tops of which stick up out

of the dirt sporadically across the mostly empty lot.

"Some of the wells you see are monitoring wells—basically they just give us information—but we've also installed what's called a ring-pump system, and you'll see in one corner of the lot there's like a pump house that houses a compressor pump type of thing," Rolheiser continues. "What we're doing is speeding up the natural remediation process. Over time, gasoline and diesel fuel, which are composed of hydrogen and carbon, will naturally break down into hydrogen and carbon—eventually hydrocarbon-impacted soil will remediate itself. What this system tries to do is to speed up that process, basically by pumping air and circulating it through those underground pipes. So basically what we're trying to do is to speed up the process that Mother Nature has underway, and we believe that's the most effective way to remediate that site."

Even with the help of this system, however, the land isn't expected to be clean enough for development for up to a decade from now. "It's difficult to, you know, to predict exactly how long it will take, but we estimate it will be

between five and 10 years," Rolheiser says when pressed for a timeline.

AT LEAST ONE area environmentalist, though, argues that even then the land will be far from pristine.

"This is the alternate approach to cleaning a site completely—digging up all the soil and carting it away somewhere to treat it," says Charlie Richmond, urban issues leader for the Prairie Chapter of the Sierra Club of Canada. "This is a risk-management approach, and essentially what that means is monitoring [the contamination] and mitigating it to some extent but not completely decontaminating the site, just in the interest of getting the site developed for the economics of it."

"However, in the case of this particular site, it is my understanding—and this is from secondary sources—that when [Imperial Oil] drilled some test holes they discovered that the contamination goes as deep as nine metres and as far as three-quarters of the way across Whyte, as well as under neighbouring buildings," he continues. "If that is the case, [to completely clean up the site] they'd have to destroy two heritage buildings

and dig a rather deep hole, and I don't think that is a practical alternative."

"With retail gas stations of this vintage, all that can be done is clean-up, so we need to ensure that the regulatory process is fair and promotes the polluter-pay principal in allocating the cost of that clean-up," agrees the Toxics Watch Society of Alberta's Miles Kitigawa, who gives Imperial Oil credit for taking responsibility for the contamination, at least in this specific case.

"I'm not really keen to beat up on Esso with this particular site, because they have retained liability and there is a kind of active remediation going on—because it's on Whyte Avenue, they're not going to be able to walk away from their liability," he continues. "If we look at something like Lynnview Ridge (a Calgary neighbourhood built on the former site of a refinery that was owned by Imperial Oil), where Esso managed to find a buyer for their contaminated land and are arguing against their liability, and other examples where there may be ticking time bombs that used to be Esso sites where we just haven't dis-

CONTINUES ON PAGE 14

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Israeli troops are southbound again in the new Middle East

COMMENT
DYER STRAIGHT
GWYNNE DYER
gwynne@vancouverweekly.com

Common sense has prevailed. Most of the Israeli troops who were sent into south Lebanon last weekend have already retreated, and the last thousand or two will be back inside the Israeli frontier by next weekend. They are not waiting for the Lebanese army and the promised international peacekeeping force to come in and "disarm Hezbollah." They are getting the hell out.

The last-minute decision to airlift Israeli troops deep into the 1 000 square kilometres of Lebanon south of the Litani river made good sense politically. That way, Israel didn't have to fight its way in and take the inevitable heavy casualties. It just exploited its total control of the air to fly its troops into areas not actively defended by Hezbollah just before the ceasefire, in order to create the impression that it had defeated the guerilla organization and established control over southern Lebanon.

However, those isolated packets of troops actually controlled nothing of value, and they were surrounded by undefeated Hezbollah fighters on almost every side. Hezbollah could not have resisted for long the temptation to attack the more exposed Israeli units, perhaps even forcing some to surrender. So the Israeli troops are coming out now, in order to give Hezbollah no easy targets.

General Dan Halutz, the Israeli chief of staff, was right to make this decision, but it removes the last remote possibility that Israel can extract any political gains from the military stalemate in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah says it has no inten-

tion of disarming and Lebanese defence minister Elias Murr says that his army will not try to disarm Hezbollah. The French, who are supposed to lead the greatly expanded United Nations peacekeeping force in the area, say that they will not commit their troops until Hezbollah is disarmed.

"Much graver ... is the erosion of Israel's myth of military invincibility"

There will probably be some kind of fudge in the end that allows at least token numbers of Lebanese army troops and a somewhat expanded UN force to operate in southern Lebanon, but Hezbollah is staying put and so are its weapons. Over a thousand people killed, much of Lebanon's infrastructure destroyed, significant damage in northern Israel as well, and at the end of this "war of choice" Israel has achieved none of its objectives.

ISRAEL'S ASSAULT on Hezbollah was as much a "war of choice" as the US invasion of Iraq. Seymour Hersh claims in this week's *New Yorker* that the Bush administration approved it months ago, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that a senior Israeli officer made Powerpoint presentations on the planned operation to selected Western audiences over a year ago.

"By 2004, the military campaign scheduled to last about three weeks that we're seeing now had already been

blocked out," Professor Gerald Steinberg of Bar Ilan University told the *Chronicle*, "and in the last year or two it's been simulated and rehearsed across the board." Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert was seduced by this plan because, lacking military experience himself, he needed the credibility of having led a major military operation. Otherwise, he would lack support for his plan to impose unilateral borders in the occupied West Bank that would keep the major settlement blocks within Israel, while handing the rest to the Palestinians. So he seized on the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers and the killing of three others by Hezbollah on Jul 12, the latest in an endless string of back-and-forth border violations, as the pretext for an all-out onslaught on the organization.

But it didn't work. The Israeli armed forces have effectively been fought to a standstill by a lightly armed but highly trained and disciplined guerilla force, and there will be major repercussions at home and abroad.

ISRAEL'S HUMILIATION might be a blessing in disguise if it persuaded enough Israeli voters that exclusive reliance on military force to smash and subdue their Arab neighbours is a political dead-end, but there is little chance of that. The Israeli politician likeliest to benefit from this mess is Benjamin Netanyahu, hardest of hard-liners, who flamboyantly quit the Likud Party last year in protest at former prime minister Ariel Sharon's policy of pulling out of the occupied Gaza Strip.

That split Likud and forced Sharon to launch a new party, Kadima, which now dominates the centre-right of Israeli politics and is the nucleus of Olmert's coal-

ition government. But Kadima may not long survive this disastrous war, and the heir apparent, at the head of a resurgent Likud, is Netanyahu. The last opinion poll in Israel gave him an approval rating of 58 per cent.

Much graver, in the long run, is the erosion of Israel's myth of military invincibility. It is always more economical to frighten your enemies into submission than to fight them, but Arabs have been losing their fear of Israel for some years now. This defeat will greatly accelerate the process, and there are a lot more Arabs than there are Israelis.

Syria's President Bashar al-Assad summed up the matter brutally but accurately when he said on Aug 14 that Israel is at "an historic crossroads. Either it moves towards peace and gives back (Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese) rights (to Israeli-occupied lands), or it faces chronic instability until (an Arab) generation comes and puts an end to the problem." Of course, he didn't mention that an Arab military victory over Israel would also effectively put an end to the Arabs, since Israel has hundreds of nuclear weapons.

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears regularly in Vue Weekly. ▼



City wants Armoury building to dance to a different tune

FORMER CLUB TO BECOME HOME FOR ART, THEATRE, NON-PROFIT GROUPS

STEVE LILLEBUEN / steve@vancouverweekly.com

When Roy Buksa bought a townhouse six years ago in Old Strathcona, the last thing he was expecting was for a nightclub to open near his back doorstep.

"My biggest surprise came about a month later when the Armoury Dance Lounge opened and they started playing their music extremely loud," he says.

"All sorts of problems arose and it became an on-going battle with the owner to get them to turn it down."

Six years and a few dozen noise complaints later, the city finally heard the booming bass as loudly as Buksa did that first night.

The result was a decision by council to not renew the lease on the city-owned building, ending its reign as a clubbing icon in Edmonton after nearly two decades of spinning tracks and selling shots under various pseudonyms. Instead, the city is letting the building sit empty for six months so the zoning can be changed to exclude the sale of liquor.

Come September, the city will start accepting proposals from non-profit organizations to lease the building from them for \$1 a year. While the rent will be affordable, the city hopes that the new tenants will cover renovating costs over the longer term and pay for its utility usage as well.

City councillor Michael Phair, whose ward includes Old Strathcona, says he is excited about the

NEWS **CITY**

prospect of converting the space into a venue for several arts organizations. It could work well, he says, as a joint-proposal between an art gallery, music and theatre group, or as festival offices and space for social services.

"It's actually a very large building so several groups could use it at the same time," he says. "If we don't get any proposals that look like they will work, then we would look at turning it into offices or perhaps some kind of residential use as a last resort."

SINCE IT WAS FIRST BUILT in 1912, the Armoury has been a landmark building in the Strathcona area. Listed as a protected heritage site as the oldest armoury still standing in Alberta, the building was used for military training of personnel in the B Squadron of the 19th Alberta Dragoons—a group that fought in both World Wars. When the military squadron was disbanded in 1965, the building was sold to the city of Edmonton.

Sitting vacant for a number of years, the city later leased the property as a gourmet restaurant. In more recent history, the site was leased as Garfield's—one of Edmonton's first shooter bars—and later as Club Malibu, a popular venue with varsity athletes and university students.

When the site reopened as the Armoury Dance Lounge in 2000, residents complained that the new dress code did little to deter the undesirable crowds that had flooded the neighbourhood under the Malibu moniker. Media coverage kept the building in the spotlight as a troubled location.

"The site has always been very problematic in terms of its proximity to residents," Councilor Phair explains. "There were constant noise complaints, rowdiness, broken bottles, fights, ... even the amount of people traveling between the building and the rest of the Whyte Avenue area was a problem."

Buksa, who is now president of the Waters Edge condo association, constantly lobbied the city on behalf of local residents. He's pleased with the end result because he saw a link between the types of crowds the establishment attracted, and all the vandalism, litter, noise and violence the surrounding area experienced over the weekends.

"Since the Armoury club has been closed, we don't have any of those earlier problems I complained about," he says. "Through association, I have to say there was a lot of spill over into the community from having that club open. When the club closed for the night, they'd leave an aftermath of problems as everyone spilled out onto the street."

WHILE THE CHANGE in the building's

CONTINUES ON PAGE 14



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NDP's Martin calls on province to bring back housing ministry

CHLOÉ FÉDIO / chloe@vuweekly.com

Shopping for a place to live comes with its expected challenges, but with the current spike in the real estate market, finding affordable housing in Alberta is becoming increasingly difficult for new Albertans coming to take advantage of the booming economy and low-income families alike.

In an attempt to bring attention to this growing problem, Ray Martin, New Democrat MLA for Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview, called on the government Aug 14 to re-create a ministry focused entirely on housing.

"We have a crisis; we have to do something about it," Martin said. "What I'm suggesting is we revert back to what Lougheed did in the boom times in the early '80s where they set up a department of housing."

Housing issues in the province are currently dealt with in the Ministry of Seniors and Community Supports, but Martin is not satisfied with the arrangement. He suggested that the government redirect resources from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation, which presently has a minister and an associate minister.

"We have two ministers in the department of infrastructure. Let's take away and have one there and make one the minister of housing," he said, adding, "This situation is not getting better, it is going to get worse."

HOWEVER, Jason Chance, spokesperson for Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, said that the existing government structure is functioning effectively.

"By working with municipalities and the not-for-profit sector, we have been quite effective in establishing new housing opportunities for low-income Albertans as well as supporting those units that we've already got in place throughout the province," Chance said.

While Martin argued that a department of housing would be able to look into all aspects of housing and explore the best options to address the issue, Chance said that the government is aware and committed to housing issues in the province.

"We have kept pace with the changing costs, in terms of how we determine who is eligible for social

NEWS HOUSING

housing, and we also have increased the funding that we provide. Going through the spectrum, in the last two years alone we've increase our funding for homeless shelters by about 60 per cent," Chance said. "We have responded, recognizing that the booming economy has created housing pressures."

STILL, Matthew MacNeil, the executive director of the Alberta Housing Coalition based in Red Deer, said that affordable housing and homelessness is a critical issue in the province that needs to take centre stage in government policy.

"We applaud the provincial government for the effort and the money that they have contributed—it's not enough, though," MacNeil said. "Affordable housing and homelessness has been an issue on the radar for several years now and it's not getting any better. We need to take a more focused, determined and active role in addressing the issue rather than constantly reacting."

He explained that the government has to do more to promote permanent affordable housing and increase the number of available homes, which are falling prey to the competitive market.

"Homelessness and affordable housing are directly and deeply inter-related—the lack of affordable housing leads to homelessness. The lack of appropriate supports—income supports, health supports and community supports—for people who are on the edge and at risk of becoming homeless, without those supports, they end up on the streets," MacNeil said.

Martin also criticized the government's current economic policies, which is promoting an influx of people into the province despite the lack of available housing.

"You can say you put up a few more dollars in, but what does that mean when people are pouring in here? They're told that there's jobs here and they come in here and they can't even get accommodation. The reality of what's happening now is not working, it should be pretty clear even to this government." ▽



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Trying to figure out the facts about fats

HEALTH

WELL, WELL, WELL

CONNIE HOWARD
health@vancouverweekly.com

Here's what had me baffled for a while: in the grocery store there is low- or no-fat dairy, low-or no-fat everything, everywhere, but at the same time there are people looking like they ate Dr Phil for breakfast, everywhere.

Some of them probably sit 24/7, some of them have carts filled with no-fat everything alongside the chips and candy bars, but some of them—I know this to be true—are religiously low-fat eaters, go to the gym, and still look like they swallowed the squid ... and the whale.

Here's my theory.

The first part is this: low-fat makes some of us fat. It does. The problem, for some of us, is that low-fat doesn't stay with us. And to make up for it, to avoid feeling constantly hungry, we end up eating more, and more often, and more carbs, which don't stay with us either. And carbs are easily and quickly converted by the body into fat.

It's pretty hard to keep weight off when you're always reaching for food, and when your body is an efficient carb-into-fat-conversion machine.

I learned some of this a long time ago, but the knowledge had been eroded by the constant flow of conventional low-fat diet messages that have created fat phobias. And then I remembered: back in my days of no-extra body weight, back when I ate freely, I trusted my intuition. All I curbed then were endless bagels and cereals, desserts and double-size glasses of juices and other sweet drinks.

So here's why I've recently started focusing more on carb content than on fat content again. My basic knowledge of biochemistry on the topic tells me that some people produce too much insulin when they follow low-fat, low-protein, high-carb diets. And all my insulin-resistant, Type II diabetic relatives tell me that I'm probably one of those people, and that my earlier direction was a better one for me.

The explanation, which gets drowned out by the conventional fat-makes-you-fat chorus, is this: while it's technically true that fat is more fattening—gram for gram, it has more caloric value than does protein or carbohydrate—it's also true that fat content lowers the glycemic index of a food, which means it slows insulin production. That's huge, because insulin, while it allows us to access energy from the food we eat, when produced in spikes gives us access to too much energy at once. It then stores the excess as fat, and, that job done, signals hunger again. Regular high levels of insulin in the body mean regular fat storage.

HEARING THE PERSISTENT and loud warnings about the evils of fats and of restricting carbs has made me forget this little truth and stop trusting my intuition, which I'm actually quite unhappy about. I miss my old jeans. They no longer fit because I got tired of



swimming against the flow and started eating a too-high-for-me carb diet. I gave in to not wanting to defend myself to raised eyebrows about my completely careless fat ingestion.

Before anybody starts hyperventilating about the strain that low-carb diets put on our kidneys, that's not what I'm advocating. I'm advocating balance that includes slow-release carbs and high-quality fats and enough protein to last for more than the usual hour a low-fat, high-carb meal would last a hyper-insulin producer like me. I'm suggesting a smaller plate of pasta with a rich olive-oil pesto or shrimp sauce, as opposed to a mountain of it with fat-free sauce. Or, an ice cream instead of a sorbet. Or a coffee with cream instead of black with sugar. Or a glass of wine with olives instead of just wine.

The second part of my theory is that the right kinds of fats are essential to not only keeping my weight off, but to avoiding depression.

Dietary fat to avoid depression? For me, yes, and not only because not getting into my favourite jeans is depressing. I know I've said this before, but it's true that our brains are primarily fat tissue, and depriving them of the right kinds of fats is at least partly responsible for today's epidemic of psychiatric disorders.

It turns out that fat expert Udo Erasmus has been saying this for more than 20 years. Used long-term, a no-fat diet will kill you. On its way there, it makes our livers, kidneys, vascular systems, immune systems, endocrine systems and brains very unhappy.

It's true that a high-fat diets can do the same thing, but only when the fats are the wrong kinds of fats—the trans fats and the colourless, odourless, refined ones that make up the bulk of bottled dressings and cooking oils on the grocery store shelves.

So I'm in for fish and seafood, flax and hemp seeds, nuts and nut butters, avocados and olives. I'm even in for some of the evil saturated ones found in normal, non-reduced dairy products like cheese, butter and cream, T-bone steak and coconut oil—though that's another article.

Now if I just could just ease up on those Margaritas we were so enjoying the other night ... ▼

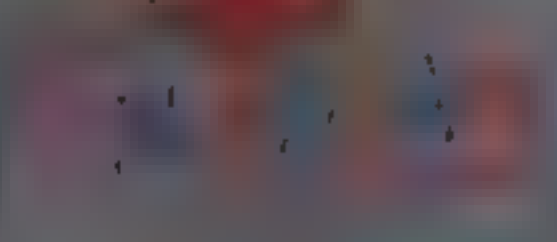
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Few tears for club closing

Toxic sites "not uncommon"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

zoning is exciting news for non-profit organizations and sleep-deprived neighbours, it comes at the cost of the club's staff losing their jobs, and youth losing their iconic dance floor in a historic site.

Casey Greabeiel co-managed the Armoury for the last eight months of its existence. He believes their license was not renewed because they were targeted during the city's recent push to crack down on the bar-heavy Whyte Avenue area.

"It had nothing to do with the operations of the Armoury, but everything to do with the political climate in the area at the time," Greabeiel claims. "We were the only bar in the area that the city had any ability to directly impact, in terms of shutting it down, since they owned it."

While Greabeiel and his team moved on and currently run Sapphire Lounge and Side Bar, they are still disappointed. He says the Armoury had the potential to keep running as a safe and fun nightclub, one that shouldn't have finished its clubbing history so soon.

"It's a very political issue," he says. "In the last eight months that we ran the club we didn't have any problems with violence or anything like that and since the city wasn't willing to grant us the ability to move our liquor license to another location, I think that speaks volumes to the fact

that they just really wanted to reduce the number of seats in bars near Whyte Ave."

For those not in the clubbing scene, however, news of the Armoury's future conversion into non-profit space came with a sigh of relief.

"That's great news," said one server at the neighbouring New York Bagel Café, who asked not to be identified. "People didn't want to come here for dinner because there were all these teenagers running around, peeing on our lawn, throwing bottles around and pulling our plants out."

"I can't imagine you're going to find anyone who is too upset about it closing down," says Shauna Petterington, who manages an apartment complex near the site. "It's improved a lot since the club closed down a few months ago, so I say 'go for it.' It's a great idea."

The city will make the site open for viewing in the coming months so interested groups can better look at the condition of the building to enable them come up with a more detailed proposed use of the location.

"I know there are a lot of people saying, 'here you've got a bunch of old folks turning the screws on the younger people,'" Buksa says, "but I think you have to find that balance between what's good for the community and what's also good for business. I think we've found that now. It will be a nice change." ▼

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

covered contamination yet, I am way more outraged when Esso attempts to use strategies to walk away from their liability [in these cases]"

BOTH RICHMOND AND Kitigawa favour more robust anti-pollution legislation as a way to prevent similar contamination in the future, but according to councillor Phair the city has no real power in these kinds of situations, as the municipal government has no control over environmental issues.

"We don't have any ability to do anything to try to make them do this more quickly or anything along those lines; other governments have jurisdiction over environmental clean-ups," he explains. "The city is frustrated as well, but we're unfortunately unable to take any steps to do anything about it. We can ask them and encourage them to do something but we have no ability to force the issue."

"The former mayor tried on a number of occasions to get Imperial Oil to move more quickly, but quite frankly they're a huge multinational corporation and this issue probably has practically no value in their context at all," he continues. "I fear that this will go on for some time, unless other orders of government take some initiative, because there's practically nothing the city can do."

In response to these concerns, Rol-

heiser insists that his company understands the frustration felt by area businesses, residents, environmentalists and politicians.

"We recognize that, because of the location of this site and its proximity to Old Strathcona and etcetera, the appearance of the site has been a concern for the community, and that's why earlier this year we tried to beautify somewhat the location as much as we could [with the installation of a new fence], but on the other hand, there's only a certain amount that we can do, because we need to bear in mind that it's an active remediation site," Rolheiser continues, stressing that the suggestion most often offered by area residents—to turn the lot into some kind of park—is completely unworkable.

"You know, as much as it looks like a vacant lot, there's things happening—work is going on from time to time, you know, trucks, vehicles, equipment come in there—but at any given time there's a pump running and the stand-pipes that you see from the street," he says. "I mean, we can't allow people access because god forbid someone would trip and injure themselves or something on some of the equipment that's there, like the standpipes or the little pump house building, that sort of thing."

MORE DISCONCERTING is the fact that, according to Rolheiser, the kind of contamination present at the Whyte Avenue site is not all that unusual.

"I wouldn't say this is a unique case—with retail gasoline stations with underground tanks built in a certain era, it's not uncommon, when those sites are decommissioned and the underground tanks are removed, to have some hydrocarbon impacted soil, and that's by virtue of when the sites were built and the technology that was available then," he says. "Currently we have much better technology—we use different materials that are leak and corrosion resistant—but all of the underground tanks that were installed in sites several decades ago were metal because that was the technology available, and when you put metal tanks in the ground and expose them to soil conditions and water sometimes they rust, and sometimes they leak."

"I mean, it's difficult to make a blanket statement and say that every single gas station is going to have contaminated soil," he continues, "but on the other hand it's not uncommon given the technology that was available when these sites were built."

It is because of this reality that the Sierra Club's Richmond strongly advocates legislation requiring more thorough and complete clean-up of polluted urban land. "In a city there are all kinds of sources of contamination, and in the long term essentially all sites will eventually be re-used, so if you simply pave them over, you'd have an accruing toxic waste dump wherever an urban centre was," he warns. "It's just a common sense issue—when you discover a mess, you clean it up." ▼

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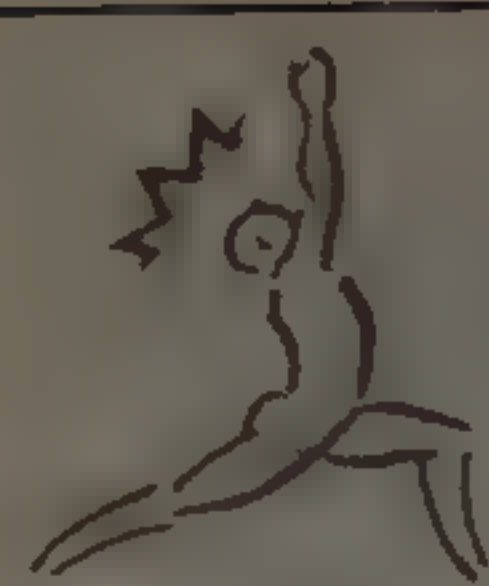
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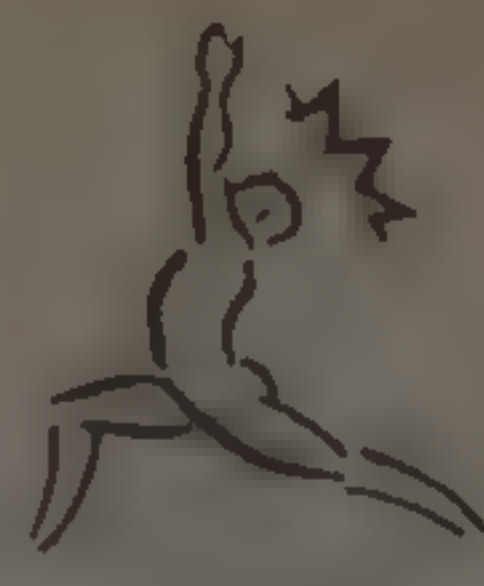
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Kertész's lens captures the solitude and beauty of reading the printed word

At the age of 16, Andre Kertész became obsessed with a young woman living across the street from his family's home in Budapest. He made notes in his journal of every glimpse of her he caught from his window. By the time Kertész was 58, living as an exile and little-known photographer in a 12th floor apartment overlooking Washington Square in New York City, this gazing at individuals from a window's viewfinder might have finally seemed like his life's defining and unmovable station: he was, as people engaged in the act of creation so often are, a solitary figure, searching the world outside from a lonely bird's eye view for other solitary figures that might somehow mirror his own situation.

Whether seated on a bench, climbing a staircase, passing through a snow-sculpted park or perched on a rooftop, the solitary figure haunts a significant and distinctive portion of Kertész's diverse and extremely prolific body of work. After the death of his beloved wife, this motif would be emphasized still more deeply by Kertész's general withdrawal from the world, the period that would produce the series entitled *From My Window*. Kertész spent much of the latter part of his long life (1894-1985) rightfully feeling underappreciated, anonymous, perhaps even cursed by misplaced genius. After having played such a pivotal, innovative role in the exploration of his chosen medium, a key influence on the likes of Henri-Cartier Bresson and Robert Capa, not to mention the Surrealists, he eventually became a frustrated figure of diminished acclaim, working away in a vacuum, a permanent stranger never to master the local language, lost in an oblivious, even hostile America.

Though this reading of Kertész's late life and work seems almost romantically awash in despair, the solace a photographer such as Kertész must have found in the practice of photographing others' solitude needs also to be accounted for. This sense of interconnectedness between solitary figures engaging in inherently solitary activities is what struck me most forcefully while looking at the large selection from Kertész's *On Reading* recently displayed at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Photography, an extraordinary series that spans the artist's entire career, including images taken in Hungary, France and the US.

On Reading is a catalogue of happy isolation, of contained vivacity, quiet ecstasy or helpless immersion; faces straining with concentration, but most often faces unseen; eyes hidden as they scan the contents of books, newspapers, pamphlets and magazines; heads balancing on fingertips or resting on every possible body part. A woman surrounded by rooftop, wearing only panties; has a book open flat between her legs (there is special attention placed here, as in other areas of Kertész's work, on the ostensible privacy of rooftops). A reader is largely disguised by a thousand shivering leaves. An otherwise tidy apartment is filled with stacks of books and periodicals, some filling comfortable-looking chairs like welcome guests. Bodies are hunched over texts in every conceivable setting, some perched on tiny stools guarded over by statues, some crunched between fellow

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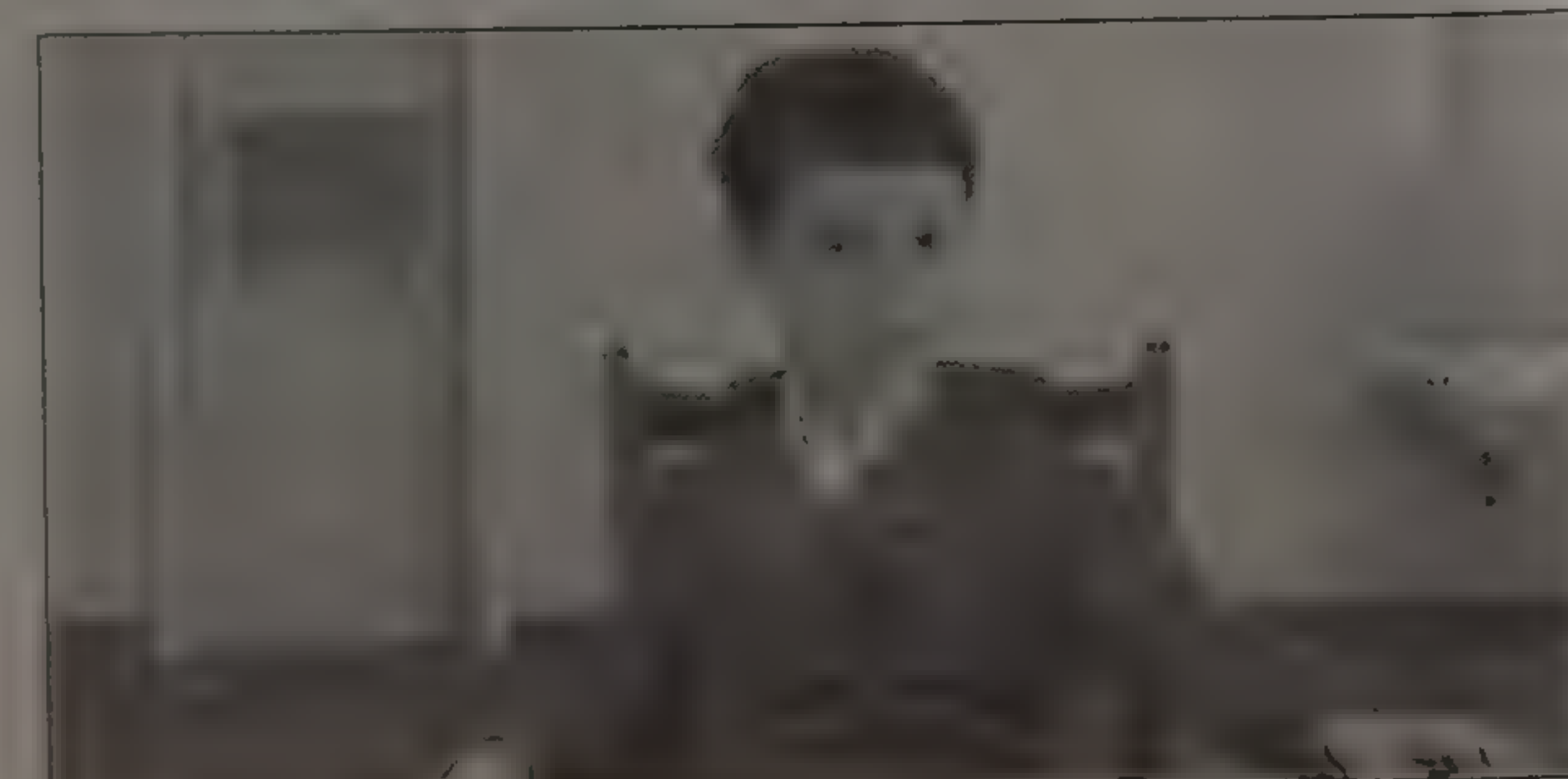
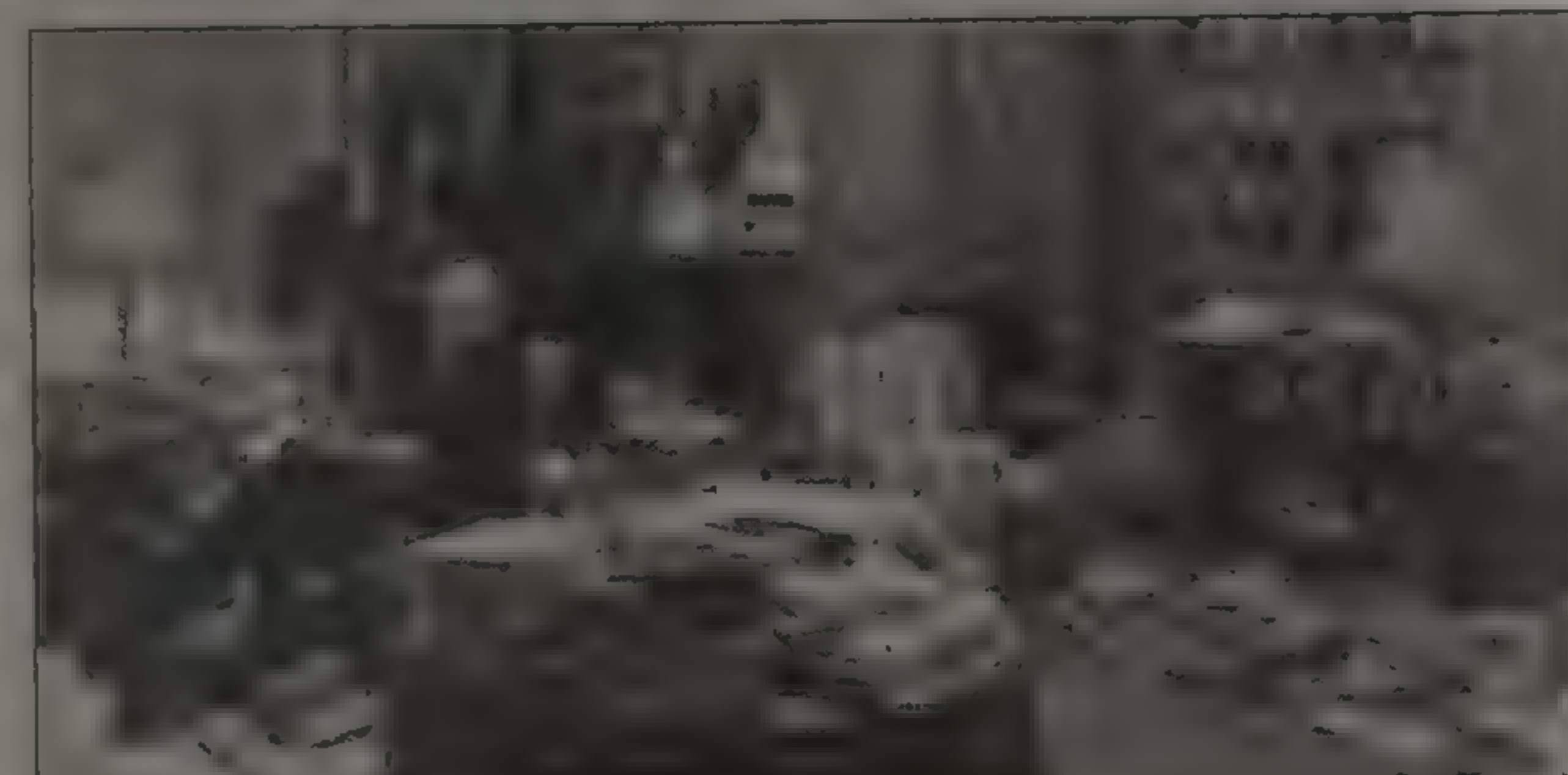
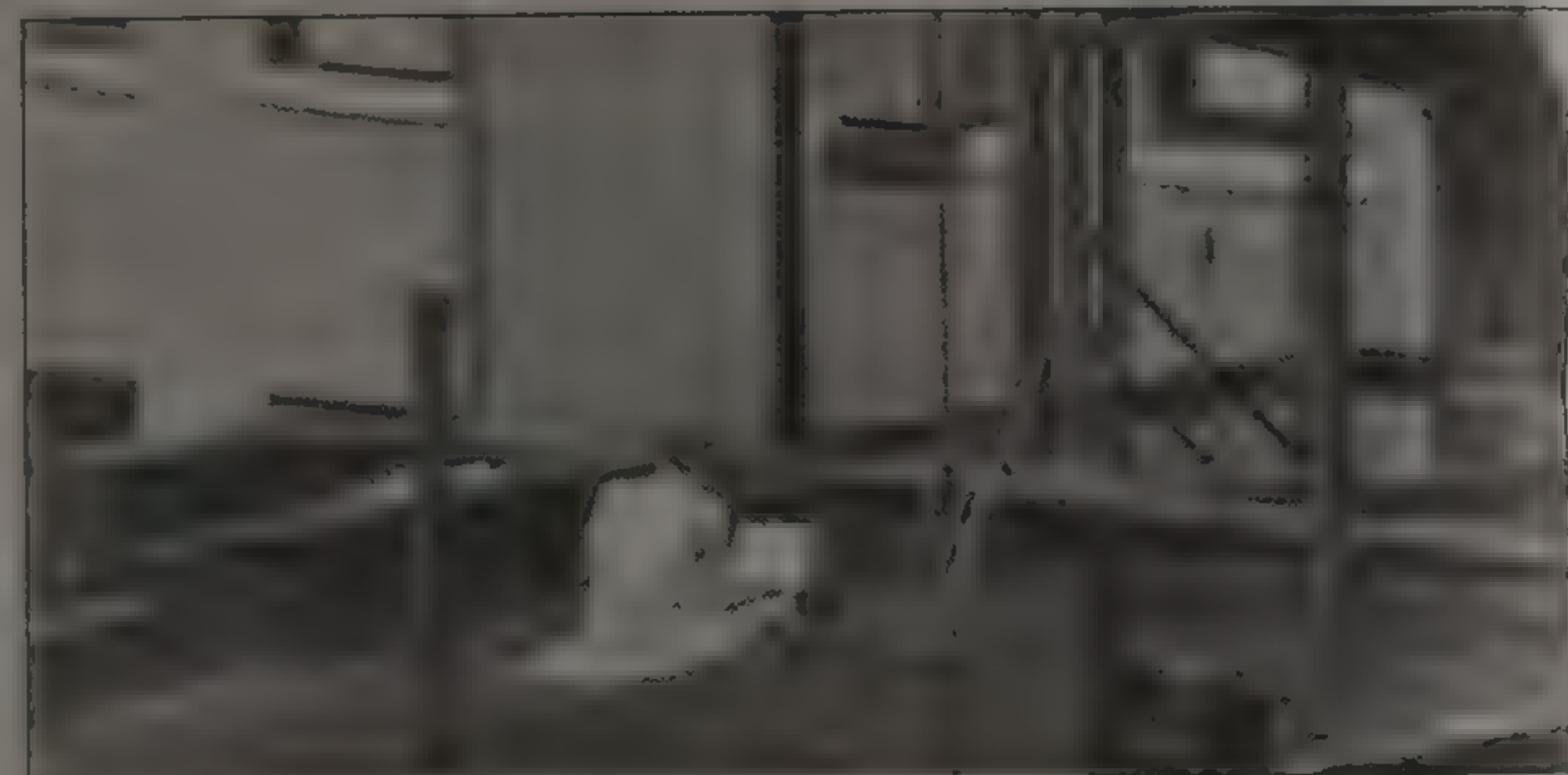
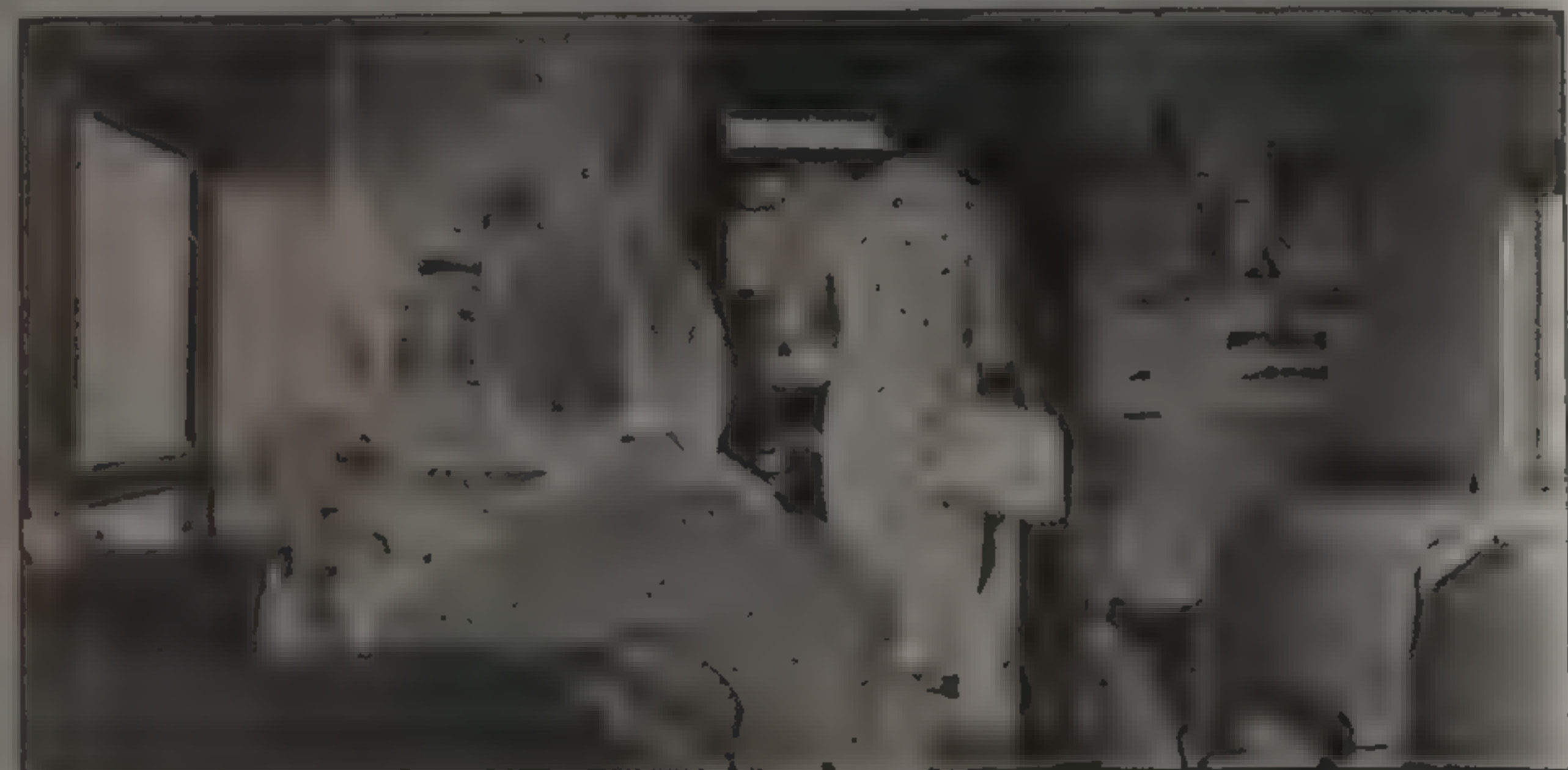
JOSEF BRAUN

hopscoth@vuwweekly.com

subway riders, some line the edges of fountains as innocently as pigeons. In one image the texture of rows of shelved books resembles the library's mouldy ceiling.

seek answers within the medium of his troubled creator.

As MoCP Curatorial Assistant Ashley Siple notes, "Kertész brings the solitary act of reading to a new level, rife with human consequences." It is as though Kertész was peculiarly attuned to reading as both an internalization of experience and as part of an enormous network, a world-wide web of expres-



ing beams, looking like some fibrous meat. There are countless fingers in mouths, hands on foreheads. There is even an insect crawling across a printed page, as though Gregory Samsa from Kafka's 'Metamorphosis' has come to

sion, absorption, revelation and hidden communion, contextualized by architecture, drama, chance and, most of all, by the framing of experience nurtured by that singular solitary figure who watches from his window. ▽

Ali's novel in nine chapters is alive with colour

BRIAN GIBSON / brian@vuvweekly.com

In 2003, Monica Ali received a warm welcome to the literary scene with the release of *Brick Lane*, a novel set in the East London Bangladeshi neighbourhood, that was nominated for a parade of literary prizes. Recently, though, Ali's debut has come under fire, with some residents of the real Brick Lane forcing the shooting of the film version off their street. "She is not one of us, she has not lived with us, she knows nothing about us," said one community leader. Germaine Greer has backed the protesters' charges of misrepresentation, while Salman Rushdie has attacked Greer's stance.

Though written before the controversy, Ali's new novel seems like a shrugging response—she's packed up and moved to a different setting. So have many of her characters in *Alentejo Blue*, named after the azure-roofed region of Portugal, where a village sees the paths of drifting Brits and heart-aching residents cross.

STRUCTURED as nine chapters that each focus on different characters, Ali offers a look through a broken window into the old town of Manarrosa, where each shard refracts a little of what was and what could still come together. Ali's descriptions and pithy comments shave away layers of character until, by the end, we reach the quick of their melancholy or hopeful-

FICTION

BY MONICA ALI
ALENTEJO BLUE
SCRIBNER (226 PAGES), \$29.95

ness.

Laying out the stories of her novel with short, sharp sentences within bursts of scenes, Ali builds a different tone in each chapter and shifts focus over three sections, moving from men to women to couples. The first third discloses the casual voyeurism and snap judgments of an antisocial writer or the swallowed grief of an overweight bar owner.

Ali's prose imbues the tender story of two men's thwarted love with a stateliness and quiet dignity. The reader feels for the pair only in retrospect, looking back on their relationship, revealed in a swirl of memories against the backdrop of Portugal's right-wing dictatorship, an era when "If you pretend [to believe] for long enough, you forget you were only pretending in the first place."

The disjointed, flitting thoughts of Jay Potts—part of the vagabondish Potts family, who eke out an existence on their dump of a farm outside town—make way for a steadier, burbling stream of consciousness from Eileen, a disgruntled wife in the first flushes of menopause

who's on holiday with her rigid, fact-seeking husband.

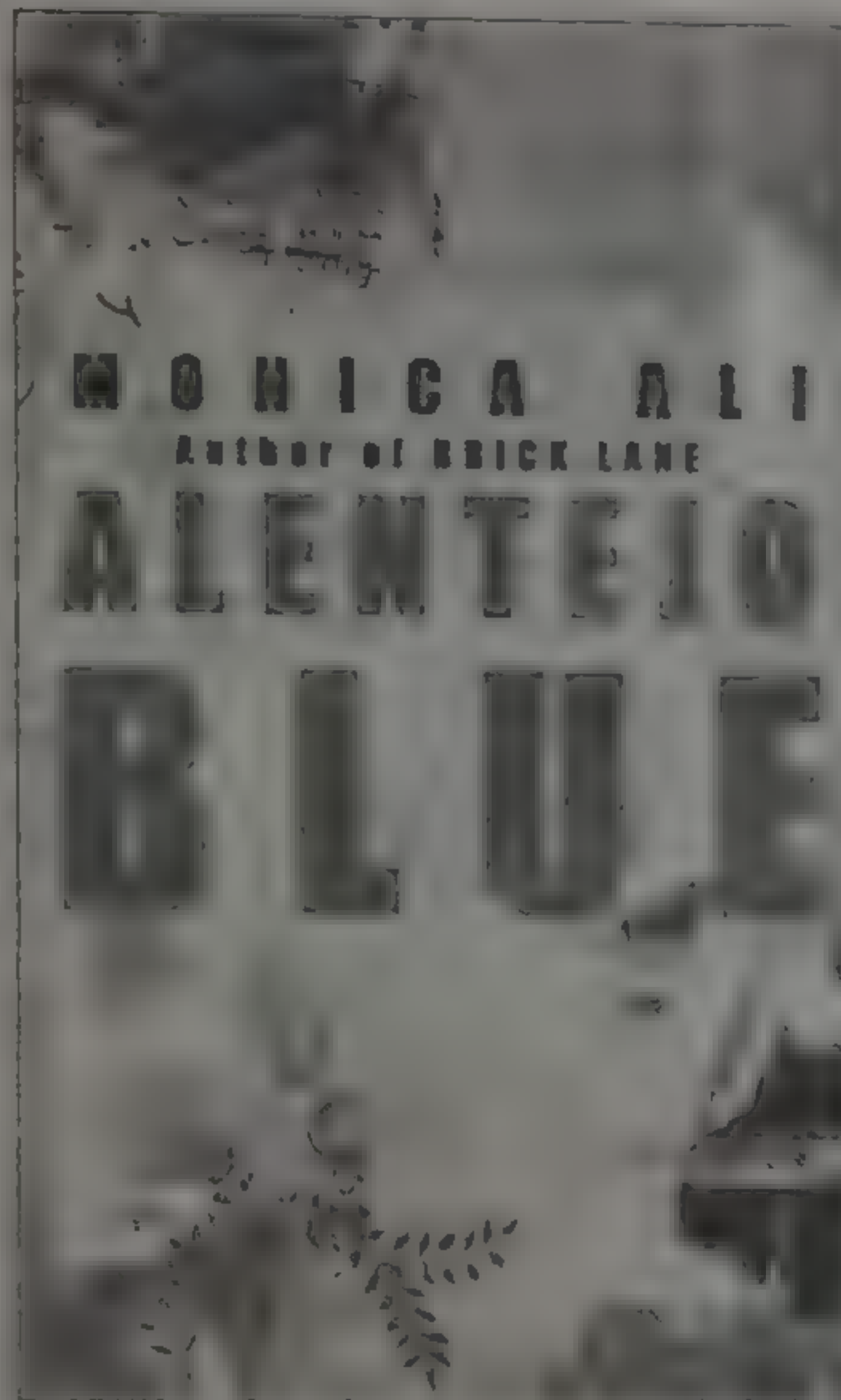
THE CENTREPIECE of the book, and the second of the women's chapters before Ali turns to couples, is the story of Teresa, a local teenager

bling and fuzzy, by the end Ali has given pitch-perfect voice to a quietly earnest woman who braces herself, deep down, for disappointment.

Here and there, parts become bogged down in too many metaphors, and one character's American wife is weakly drawn, but what Ali does so well is measure that flux of feelings anyone can go through—that surf of contradictions which will wash up gladness, irritation, relief and then ebb away, with the person suddenly feeling "restored and generous." And when one character briefly assesses another whose world Ali has entered in an earlier chapter, we realize how much they misunderstand and overlook.

Alentejo Blue isn't a very sexy, flashy, exotic or epic book, as its publishers seem to realize, if the book jacket—still harping on the success of *Brick Lane* and offering a muddled, misleading summary of this book—is any indication.

Ali grounds these nine tales in a vivid sense of place, from cork trees and tile-floor houses to country fields and town bars, but she's always striving for a sense of the messy, rueful, yearning lives of the people who make a place. It's this earthiness, the heartfelt stroll through odd neighbours' lives, that makes *Alentejo Blue* such a humble, pleasant, and quietly perceptive work of fiction. ▽



dreaming of running off to London to work as a nanny. Though a little ram-



Top 10 Ringtones

- 1) **Ridin'**
Chamillionaire
- 2) **Unfaithful**
Rihanna
- 3) **Promiscuous (Girl)**
feat. Timbaland
Nelly Furtado
- 4) **Sexy Back**
Justin Timberlake
- 5) **Shake That**
Eminem
- 6) **Animal I Have Become**
Three Days Grace
- 7) **Thunderstruck**
AC/DC
- 8) **Hips Don't Lie**
Shakira
- 9) **Because I Got High**
Afroman
- 10) **Sexy Back (Alt. Vsn)**
Justin Timberlake

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Like a Pavlovian nerd: music and memories of videogames past

GAMES

INFINITE LIVES

infinitelives@vuwweekly.com

The sweet spot at the Sidetrack seems like the sort of spot one would avoid at a live show. But that stout square pillar at stage right casts a nice big crowd-shadow, an open area of air and freedom amid the multitudes jostling and tippy-toeing for sightlines, and if you don't mind not actually seeing the band—you can peek around the corner now and then if you need to, make sure they haven't been replaced by karaoke ringers—the sound is fantastic. You're more or less at the mirror coordinates of the sound guy, and the mass of the pillar cuts out the nasty white clash of raw loudness so you get a full, nuanced sound you can really let your ears wander around in. That's where I am now zoning out and nodding as Carla Bozulich wails through "Baby That's the Creeps," thinking about Pokémon.

Pokémon? It happens, sometimes. I'll catch a glimpse of a faded Bulbasaur or Tentacool sticker on a ratty old binder in a pile of end-of-the-month dumpsterside junk and it all comes back to me—the long walks through the tall grass on the outskirts of Pallet Town, scaring up wild Pidgery and Kakuna; the strategic intensity of the gym battles; the raw fever of Gotta Catch 'em All! But why now, and why here?

Sound triggers, man; the melody, as they say, haunts my reverie. It was

almost eight years ago, in the deep autumn of 1998, that I began—improbably, almost impossibly—my career as a videogame writer with a right-place-right-time pitch: working as a proofreading drone at the *Journal*, I saw the Pokémon press kit neglected on the edge of the then-entertainment editor's desk and, having a friend recently returned from Japan with wide-eyed tales of

feral twang—are taking me back, displaying the years.

THOSE WERE EXCITING DAYS, and tough to leave behind; musically, spiritually, emotionally, morally, financially and professionally I've never really escaped from that '98 basement suite. And why escape? Along with *Butch*, there's the Zoobombs' *Welcome Back, Zoobombs!*,

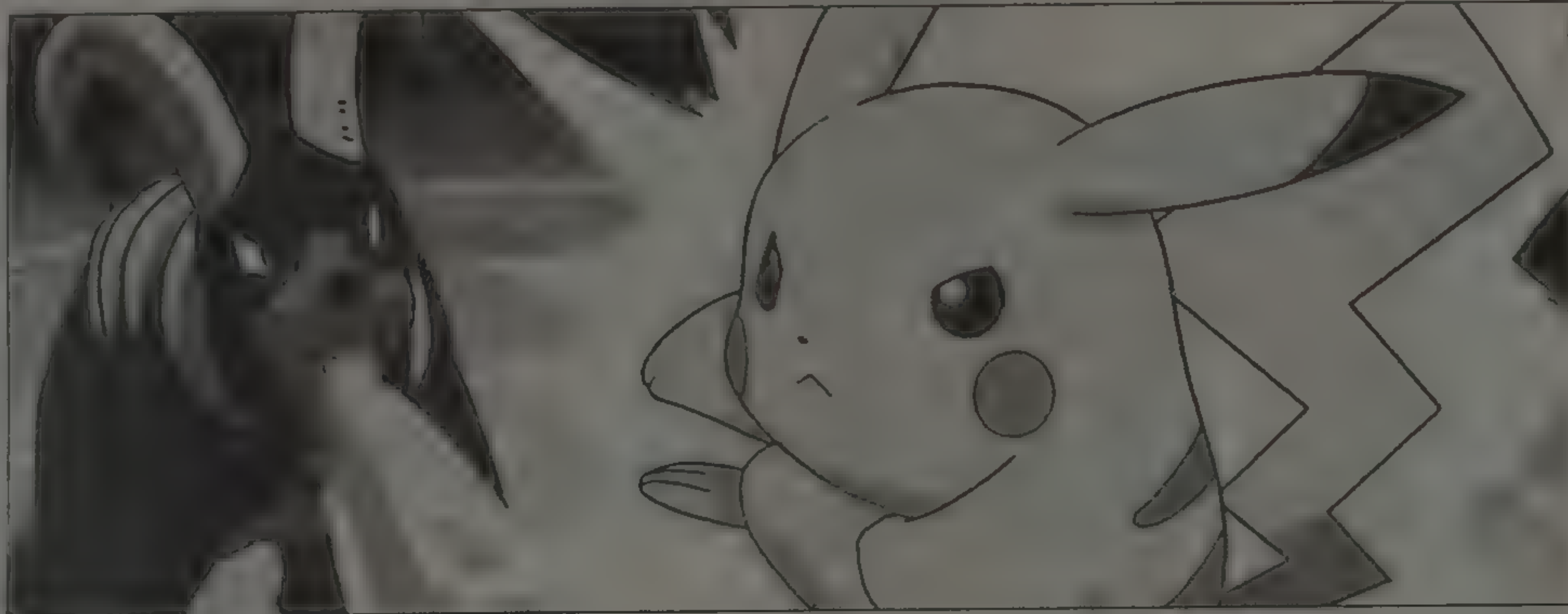
Champa, a single second of a certain quaver in Carla's voice.

Eight years! Eight years. A lot of water under a lot of bridges, thousands of hours of videogaming for rent money. Plenty of time for a network of audio associations to build up, wrap themselves around my memory core and send their tendrils deep. Some are less subtle than Carla Bozulich sending me back to Pokémon

her to the KFC in less than 20 goddamn seconds. Look, lady ... the place is only 800 metres away! What are you taking a taxi—let alone a crazy taxi—for, anyway? YAH-YAH-YAH-YAH-YAH!

It works the other way all the time as well, when there's a phrase in a game's music that's similar enough to the melody of a pop single that you can't play the game without getting that song stuck in your head. The GameCube cleaning-robot adventure *Chibi Robo*, for example, had something in it, somewhere, that lodged Cyndi Lauper's "She Bop" deep in me for weeks. And I seem to recall an old Japanese RPG—I think it might have been *Star Ocean*—that so aggressively re-introduced the Scorpions' glasnost anthem "Wind of Change" into my psyche that I had to quit playing. Currently, playing *Oblivion*, there's this one bit that nags me, a snippet of '80s pop in the score I can't quite nail down and it's driving me crazy. I'd turn off the in-game tunes and slap in some Danzig, but *Oblivion*'s music—which changes to Battle Theme whenever trolls and skeletons and shit want to kick your ass—provides an indispensable danger sense.

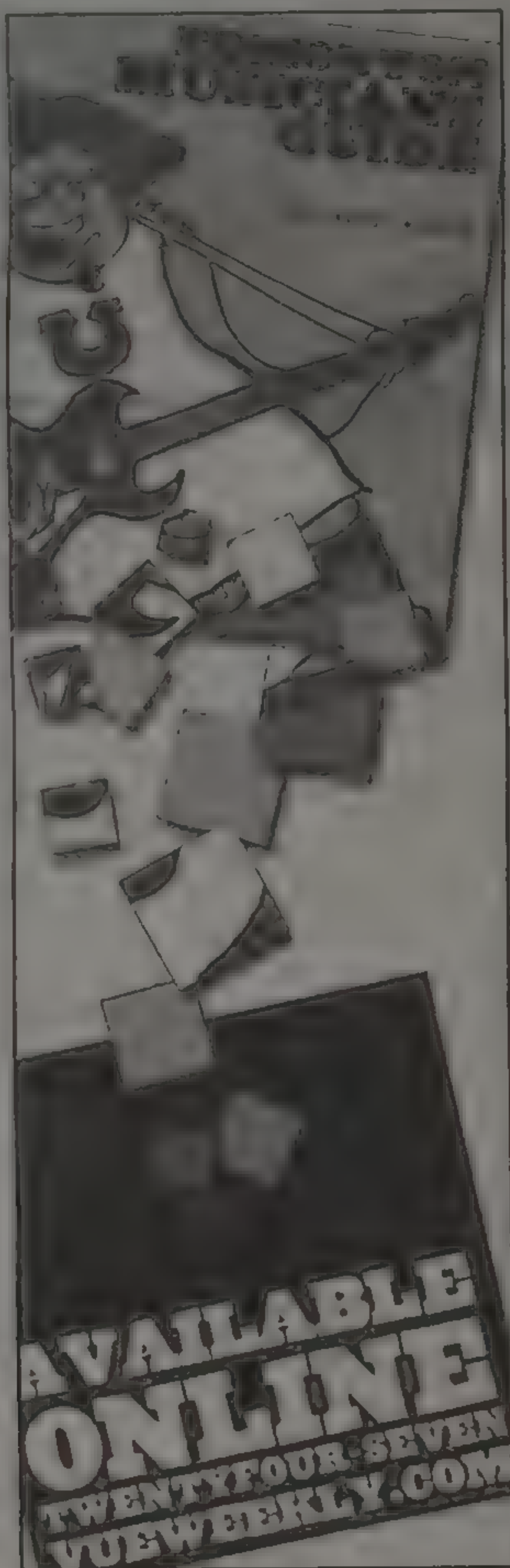
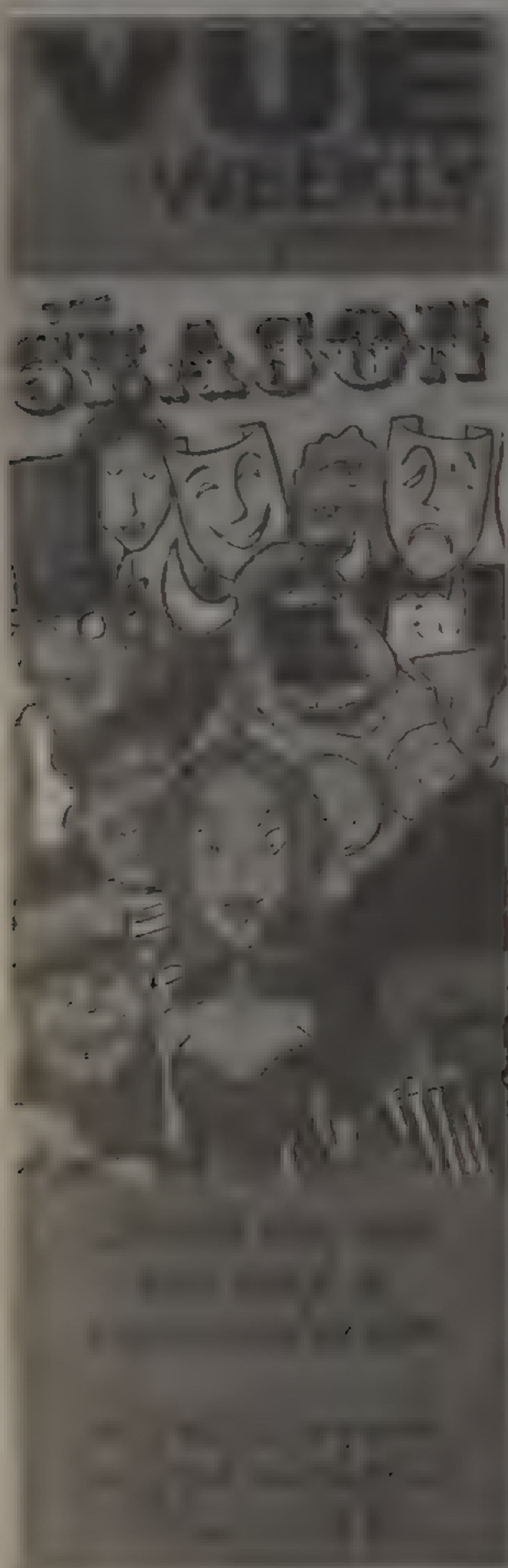
Up on stage, Carla's into the title track from her awesome new record, *Evangelista*. Pokémon thoughts fading, coming back up into this moment behind my pillar, I'm kind of glad my friend and I didn't follow through on our supernerd plan to bring our Nintendo DSs to the show: do I really want to spend the next eight years hearing a haunted, wavery organ drone every time I fire up PictoChat? ▼



Pokémonia, insisted the thing was going to be huge and that I should knock out a preview feature. That turned into a weekly thing, the sweetest and easiest money a hack could ever hope to pull ... and throughout that bright and golden time I was listening a lot to *Butch*, the second album by Carla's band the Geraldine Fibbers. The music's different, but the built-in codes of her voice—that

Cibo Matto's *Viva! La Woman* (already a year or two old) and Beck's *Mutations* soundtracking *Oddworld*, *Ocarina of Time*, *Legend of Legaia* (don't laugh) and *Bushido Blade*. There's Hideo Kojima's *Metal Gear Solid* and RL Burnside's *Come On In*. There's the sweet rush of that first no-roommate pot-smokin' bachelor living ... and all it takes to return is the sight of an old grey PlayStation, a whiff of Nag

Red on my old Game Boy Pocket ... to this day, I can't hear an Offspring song—any Offspring song—without having my head shoved back to that blissful Y2K and the power-brat "Yah-yah-yah-yah-yah!" that kicked off every sweet Dreamcast Crazy Taxi run. Damn ... there was a videogame! Crazy drifting through traffic with a screeching harpy in the backseat, giving you shit because you couldn't get



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No, Mr Bond, I expect you to dive

GOOD THING BAD ACCENTS DON'T MATTER UNDERWATER AS VUE'S CORRESPONDENT GOES DOWN

JEREMY DERKSEN / jeremy@vuweekly.com

There's something about scuba diving that makes me feel a little like Bond, James Bond.

There were no villains chasing me with harpoon guns when I did my first sea dive off the southern coast of France, but as I descended into the murky depths following a steel chain down towards dark nothingness, I felt a thrill. Beneath me, there was a whole unknown world.

That day began with the usual navigational challenges. "Pas loin d'ici" (not far from here), I was told by the people when I asked for directions in my stilted French. In the beach town of Canet en Roussillon, finding an English-speaking person on the streets at 8:00 am isn't likely, so I'd given myself extra time to find the dive centre.

Thankfully, I arrived early, so I walked over to a nearby café and indulged in one of my favourite French morning rituals: a breakfast of pain aux chocolat and espresso.

The sun was already blazing as I strolled along the marina. Temperatures in southern France had risen from seasonably hot to extreme, prompting warnings from France's health minister. I was cursing myself for forgetting my sunscreen as I reached the dive centre.

Situated on Rue Abdon Gaux, Aquatile (www.aquatileplongee.com) looks onto the Canet marina. A single dive with them costs 50 euros (about \$70 Canadian) and they accept PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) certification. I chose them mainly because it was close to where I was staying; a search on the PADI website (www.padi.com) reveals dive shops up and down the southern coast. Nonetheless, my selection was a good one: at Aquatile, I found genial hosts and experienced guides who were helpful and instructive.

I WAS DIRECTED into a cozy, neoprene-smelling shack, where an instructor helped me assemble my gear. First I grabbed a wetsuit and fins, then selected my buoyancy control device, or BCD, a vest that does exactly what its name says.

Setting up your dive gear properly is important. First off, you don't want to get into your wetsuit too early, especially in hot conditions, since it acts as an insulator. Instead, you set up your tank, BCD and regulators first, get your mask, snorkel and fins together, and then jump into the suit.

The tank attaches to the BCD, which has locking straps to secure it in place. Your regulators—including



TRAVEL SCUBA DIVING

the mouthpiece you breathe from—come next. The regs are sometimes referred to as your octopus, because of all the hoses dangling from the regulator attachment.

Once our gear was together we loaded it into the jetty and seated ourselves along the inflated pontoons. There were seven other divers on this trip—all French, so communication was limited.

As we rounded the rocky point of the marina, the divemaster warned us (in French) that we should hold the ropes so that we didn't fall overboard. Then he gunned the motor and we were ripping through the waves. The salty spray showered my face as we hammered the surf. For half an hour we followed the coastline towards Spain, the little beachside villages slowly giving way to forest and vegetation, and then high, green cliffs.

Soon we were at Collioure, a historic Catalunyan town built on the cliffs above the sea. We dropped anchor and the boat rocked with the waves. The ancient fort, the cathedral and the terraced rooftops of the town overlooked our dive site.

I LEANED BACKWARDS over the side and fell into the water. Being from western Canada, I've swum in glacial pools and cold BC lakes. Even though I knew the Mediterranean would be much warmer, I'm used to expecting cold—not that I minded. I deflated my BCD and let out my breath, sinking below the waves. Grabbing the anchor chain, I swam slowly downwards, remembering to equalize every few feet as I went. Equalizing, or relieving the pressure from your sinus cavities, is one of the most important parts of diving. Whether ascending or descending, managing the pressure in your internal air spaces is necessary for comfort and safety.

At depth, the water was murky

blue-green. The underwater reefs were covered in seaweed and shells. Green sea anemones and orange sunburst-coloured starfish clung to the rocks. Schools of oblivious fish swam by, but the most fascinating were the octopi. The felines of the deep, they are both inquisitive and timid. Their bulbous heads peered from tight crevices, their eyes following us as we swam. It was hard to get a good look at them—whenever we got too close they would shrink back. As my dive partners swam ahead, I hovered over one, letting myself float slowly upward a few feet. The octopus, curious, emerged. His tentacles were purple and white, moving in all different directions. We shared a questioning stare and then, as miraculously as he'd appeared, he vanished into his crevice again.

As I swam, I practiced air control. The BCD gives you buoyancy at the surface but underwater you use your breathing to regulate your depth. Breathe out too much and you'll sink; fill your lungs and you'll drift

upwards. Regulating the air in your lungs as you breathe is a challenge but it's a fun skill to master. More importantly, in delicate ecosystems it's how you avoid bumping and damaging thousand-year-old coral. For this first dive, it was a good thing we weren't near any sensitive areas. I got better as I went along, but I cheated several times by putting a finger or two on the reef to balance

All too soon, it was time to ascend. A dissociative euphoria hit me as my head rose above the surface; the sky, the cliffs and the sea were brighter and had more depth. In just 45 minutes below, I'd forgotten there was a world outside the serene calm 10 metres under.

Afterwards, our whole group shared a sense of elation. Perhaps it was the excitement or the underwater sign language that had put us at ease, but it seemed we were able to converse more fluently in both French and English on the way home. Still, as my dive made clear to me, my French is better underwater. ♥

Hit the links without fighting through tourists

BANFF BECKONS WITH BACK ALLEYS, QUIET GREENS AND CULTURE

WAYNE ARTHURSON / wayne@vnewsweekly.com

Despite its reputation as a tacky tourist destination, there are still plenty of secrets left in Banff National Park.

The first secret is that if you want to walk around town without having to dodge lookee-loo's checking out bits of chocolate or pseudo-Canadiana ~~in the back alleys~~ in the back alleys. In the time it takes you to navigate a bus tour of Europeans wondering if they should buy a pound of fudge, you can cross the entire town through its back-alley system.

~~The other secret with Banff is~~ do with golf. Okay, that's not really a secret: a good many folks come to Banff and the surrounding mountain ~~area to play golf~~ fashioned golf in Banff—the kind of golf where there's no real dress code, ~~no \$100 green fees~~—is to overlook the shiny green courses that everyone ~~likes to play~~.

For a moment, forget your political ~~views~~ off Highway 1, make a right. Turn right onto the Seebe/Exshaw turn-off and you'll find a down-home, decent set of links that harkens to a time when golf wasn't about who designed the course, which has-been played there or whether it takes nine months to book a tee time

FORE! GOLF

The Kananaskis Ranch Golf Resort is a quiet, family-run course that might be a little off the beaten track but is by no means a cakewalk. Designed by Bud Brewster, a scion of the famous Brewster family, the course (nine holes now but with 18 expected in 2007) sits on the family's original homestead, under the watchful guidance of Yamnuska Mountain. The under-development feel of the course, which compliments the natural landscape of the foothills rather than overwhelms it, presents more of a challenge than one of those over-green Augusta wannabes.

The first two holes, Par 5 and 4 respectively, were pretty straight but long. And since this was my first round of golf in a couple of years, I forgot about my tendency to slice. I counted about four lost balls by the time I had putted out of the second hole. On the other hand, my short game was still intact and at no time did I putt more than twice on a hole. By the third hole, I was loose, driving high and straight, finishing with a decent bogey, and a positive feeling.

THEN CAME HOLE 4. At almost 400

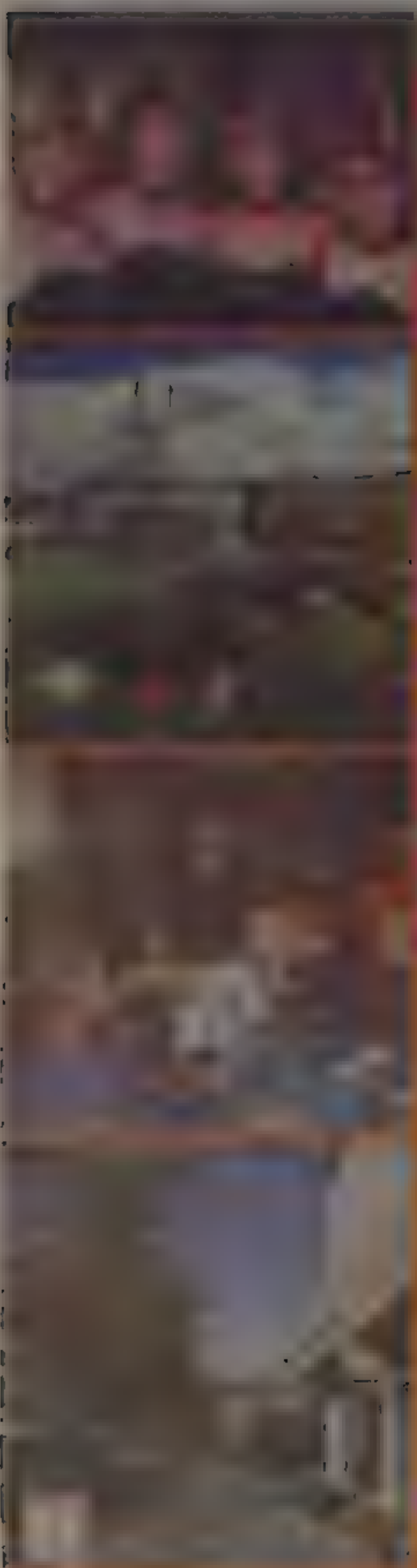
yards it was a long par 4, but with a 90-degree dogleg to the right that tempts you to try a drive over the ridge to the green. Ignore that temptation because this hole faces due west, directly into the prevailing winds, which can jump to life just as your

driver connects to your ball. Three mulligans into this hole, I put the driver and my pride into the bag and hit into the fairway. This one hole reminded me of my golf limitations and throughout the rest of the round I played like a good boy and had a

great day of golf. No birdies, but a couple of decent pars.

For most of my round, there was no one in front or behind me, save for a couple of drifting red-tail hawks. And

CONTINUES ON PAGE 72



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There's something in the water at Panorama

BIKING, RAFTING, GOLFING ... AND A THE ULTIMATELY FAILED PURSUIT OF A SUPERHERO

COLIN CATHREA / colin@vancouverweekly.com

I couldn't catch Wonder Woman. Through the dust cloud I could see her red cape flapping in the wind. Trying to chase her down, I lost my handlebars. Now I know why so many bikers love this place. Still, it was a blast, like so many of the other activities at Panorama Mountain Village.

A six-hour drive from Edmonton (just past Invermere, BC), Panorama is ideal for a summer getaway. On its website, www.panoramaresort.com, Panorama boasts a mind-boggling array of summer activities—at last count there were 26 categories listed. And, with a full weekend ahead, I was going to fit in as many as I could. After a quick stop in Friday afternoon, Karen and I head up to the resort for the weekend. A beautiful view of the mountains looking up to the town of Panorama. In full view of the resort park, kids' area, volleyball court and miles of mountain bike trails. We're scheduled for a whitewater rafting trip Saturday and golf the Sunday. In between there are all

AREA PANORAMA

kinds of other activities to fill out the days. One of the first things we notice is that all the staff are really friendly and helpful. I began to suspect that management was spiking the staff water supply with happy drugs.

Just under our condo we find the bike rental shop, which has a plethora of KONA bikes sitting in racks outside the door. All are full-suspension, aluminum war machines making my Bianchi Peregrine look like a Model T Ford. However, at \$60 per hour or \$90 for a full day, I decide to try my bike to start. Karen thinks hers will be fine as well, as she's planning to stick to the green runs.

Our first trip down Rocking Horse is a rocking good time. I've tuned the bikes up so there's no incessant brake squeal. Karen gets the hang of it rather quickly considering her limited downhill experience. We piecemeal our way down, but it's time for me to get a little more adrenaline flow, so I give the blue runs Dog Town and Moose Powder a rip. Getting the con-

fidence up, I'm taking air over the bottom rollers as they become more familiar. One thing I notice is that I'm a hell of a lot more confident and can go way faster down these same runs on my skis. Of course, falling on snow is far less tragic.

THE NEXT MORNING, after a quick breakfast, we decide to snoop around beside the golf course at the new million-dollar log mansions down on Grey Wolf Drive. There is a beautiful paved path that carves its way through the village, around the golf course and down Toby Creek. Looking down at Toby, we see there's a good water level that should expedite our trip this afternoon. That afternoon, we take the gondola down to the river, and walk across the suspension bridge to the Adventure Center. This is where we are to meet up with the "Kootenay River Runners" tour group.

We're early, so we lay out on the grass. Within a few seconds I spy a guy ripping towards the fence on his bike. He jumps a grass knoll, plants the front wheel under full brake and flip-rolls over the handlebars to his

feet, introducing himself as Tim, our rafting guide. Most excellent, a Kamikaze whitewater guide! A crowd of around 30 people mill in, get their life jackets and gear and then we head off to the bus to take us upriver for launch. Except for Karen and I, our group is all first-timers.

"Hard forward!" Tim shouts and gets us paddling towards the biggest rock in the river. It's soon evident we are not going to attempt to miss the drops, rocks and obstacles in Toby Creek. Tim wants us to get the full experience of crashing and bumping into as many as possible. He's a cagey bugger, as he gets the raft going sideways so when we hit a rock, the guys facing upstream can't see it coming and get drenched. Tim is also very funny. His stories and banter make the two-hour trip much more fun. We pass under a wedding that is taking place at a five star condo on the riverbank. I will discover later that this is the wedding of Wonder Woman.

Another good dinner and good sleep readies me for 18 holes at the incredible Greywolf Golf Course. This course is so bloody spectacular and beautiful it's hard to keep your mind

on the game. It's also undulating, narrow and tough. The famous par three "Canyon" hole is amazing, one of those things that a photograph can't duplicate. I'm very happy to have experienced one of the top golf courses in North America. In fact, *Golf Digest Magazine* rates it in the top 10 in Canada.

So now I'm pumped for another rip on the mountain bike. I arrive at the chairlift and meet a group of strangely dressed whackos. They are in super hero costumes and other very odd attire. This is when I spy Wonder Woman heading up the lift. I am compelled to follow. We disembark at the top and I ride over for a better look. A stunning blond in full contact gear with a red flashy cape! She takes off and I follow, passing her shortly thereafter. This pisses her off and she is soon back in the lead. I press forward, but then those damn rollers throw me. I crash and break out laughing (must be the happy water getting to me). As I pick myself up, I reflect on the great weekend I've had and chalk up my crash to another invaluable outdoor lesson ... don't race super heroes. ▼

(PHOTO: PANORAMA MOUNTAIN VILLAGE)

I did not run into another set of... there was no pressure from... the... marshal to make a four... In fact, all she had for us was a pleasant demeanor and an opportunity to buy a cold beer. The Kananaskis... Resort is the perfect anti-... over-crowded, over-

priced, over-developed golf world that many people accept as gospel.

WITH MY RETURN to golf complete, I headed into Banff for more Brewster Family hospitality. Although located in downtown Banff, the Brewster Mountain Lodge was an oasis of down-to-earth serenity. The staff were casual and friendly, and my room faced an

indoor courtyard—a quiet spot to relax before a night in Banff.

Many would assume that such a night would focus on hopping around the numerous watering holes in Banff and they would assume wrong. Another secret that many people sadly overlook about Banff is with the Banff Centre for the Arts just up the hill. Banff probably has more

art-centred events than Edmonton and definitely more than Calgary. Just check out its Summer Festival, during which there's at least one art event daily.

That Friday night, there was *Manitowapan*, the newest piece by famed Canadian choreographer Gaetan Gingras. Also on the bill was *Tree Of Life: Time Of Drought*, a piece choreo-

graphed and featuring Rulan Tengen. More recently, she choreographed scenes in Mel Gibson's upcoming film, *Apocalypse*. So it was a stunning night of international calibre dance, an odd ending to a day of golf for sure. But if you keep your eyes open and look beyond the obvious in Banff, you'll find a town that's more interesting than the reputation that precedes it. ▼

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GREAT HEAD / 29



Nothing could be finer than dinner at the Blue Plate Diner

CHRISTOPHER THRALL / dish@vueweekly.com

Every once in a while, a restaurant emerges to perfectly capture its time and place. The glamorous Waldorf-Astoria of culinary experimentation and the velvet rope to keep out the riffraff was turn-of-the-century New York; the Brown Derby was a Hollywood slice of conspicuous consumption and desperate hedonism in the Dirty Thirties. Right now, in all its funkified and pancultural urban core, the Blue Plate Diner is Edmonton.

The Diner is a downtown yuppie's dreamscape: textures and colours weave together to form an ode to the eclectic. Exposed brick walls boasted vibrant local art under 14 foot ceilings. Odd-windowed walls separated

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booths along one side, while brown government-building tile covered the floor. From the huge, street-level windows you could watch the city's gentrification.

On a busy Tuesday night, the overextended but serene server gave me a warm, welcoming smile and left me with both drink and food menus. Tonight I was flying solo, so I flipped through mid-range, kitschy cocktails along with a decent wine list and beer selection before settling on a Lynchberg Lemonade (\$7). (In a former life,

I was a Jack Daniels man.)

My dinner order was much more challenging: since it wasn't Friday night, I couldn't simply request the dazzling weekly special. However, starters, salads, sandwiches and dinners were far less expensive than I expected and described more lusciously than I could imagine. Should I try the stuffed artichoke hearts, the Caesar salad's roasted red pepper dressing or the baked tandoori chicken? Pity the savoury dilemmas of your friendly neighbourhood restaurant reviewer!

WITH MY SERVER'S GUIDANCE, I settled on the grilled shrimp to start (\$8), followed by a cornmeal-crusted Cajun

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Is great taste popping up all over?

ELLA JAMESON / ella@vuueweekly.com

I can't resist a big bag of popcorn when I go out to the movies. It doesn't matter if I've just finished supper or I have a cholesterol test in the morning—there is no defence against the tempting aroma of freshly popped popcorn.

At home, it's an overflowing bowl of fluffy white kernels made with care in my own kitchen. But somehow it's just not the same. Is there some popcorn out there that can match the flavour and texture of theatre-style? One Saturday evening, I gathered a group of popcorn lovers to find out what the supermarkets had to offer.

The first known use of popcorn was in Mexico over 5 000 years ago. Samples of popping corn have been found in archeological sites throughout Central and South America. European explorers reported tasting popped corn in the 1490s while visiting the eastern shores of North America.

Today, most of us pop our corn in the microwave. In the '40s, popcorn was actually used to help develop the microwave oven itself. Shelf-stable microwave popcorn has been around for about 25 years.

I COLLECTED FOUR different microwave popping corns and some old fashioned Jolly Time, determined to try them out for taste and overall enjoyment. As a baseline, I picked up

TASTE TEST MICROWAVE POPCORN

some popcorn from the Princess Theatre. The Princess serves theirs with a mixture of half margarine, half butter. According to the helpful staff, half and half is the preferred blend of theatregoers.

Four friends assembled on my patio in the cool evening air while I went inside to prepare samples. I didn't want the sound or smell of the preparation to affect their taste buds in any way. I poured a few cocktails to cleanse our palates, and after a short briefing, we were ready to go to work.

We tried Safeway-brand Theatre-Style, Act II Butter Lover's, Orville Redenbacher's Reden-budders, Safeway Light Natural, plus Jolly Time popcorn made both with the air popper and on the stovetop (cooked with oil and subsequent butter added).

At 32 calories per cup and only 0.8 g of fat, the **Safeway Light Natural** (73 cents per bag) was served up first. To be honest, this is what I usually eat at home, adding popcorn spice and forgoing the butter altogether in a vain attempt to maintain my figure.

Although judged a bit bland (I served it without enhancement), we all agreed that it had great texture and fullness. Rating low on the oiliness

scale, we all felt pretty good about its virtuousness.

Next was **Jolly Time** cooked in oil on the stovetop (20 cents for 10 cups popped). It was far richer, coming in at 89 calories per cup and a whopping 7.4 g of fat, due to both oil and 2 tbsp of butter. The same product in the air popper reduced the calorie load to 64 per cup and, after dousing it with butter, 4.6 g of fat.

Of the two, the stovetop was preferred slightly over the air popped, mostly because of the fantastic texture. Strangely enough, small amounts of burnt kernels in the bowl actually added to the appeal of the stovetop version.

Next, at 73 calories per cup and 5.6 g of fat, the authentic **Princess Theatre popcorn** was quickly identified as the genuine article. Our munching horde found it lush, moist and buttery. The light, natural color was attractive, although it was clearly oily. One friend said that it tasted great but it probably wasn't good for him.

WHEN IT CAME TO the products that promised "authentic butter flavour," things became more personal. All three of our butter-flavoured microwave popping corns had a nutritional price of 40 calories per cup and 2.5 g of fat.

Safeway's Theatre-Style (73 cents per bag) promised extra butter flavour

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

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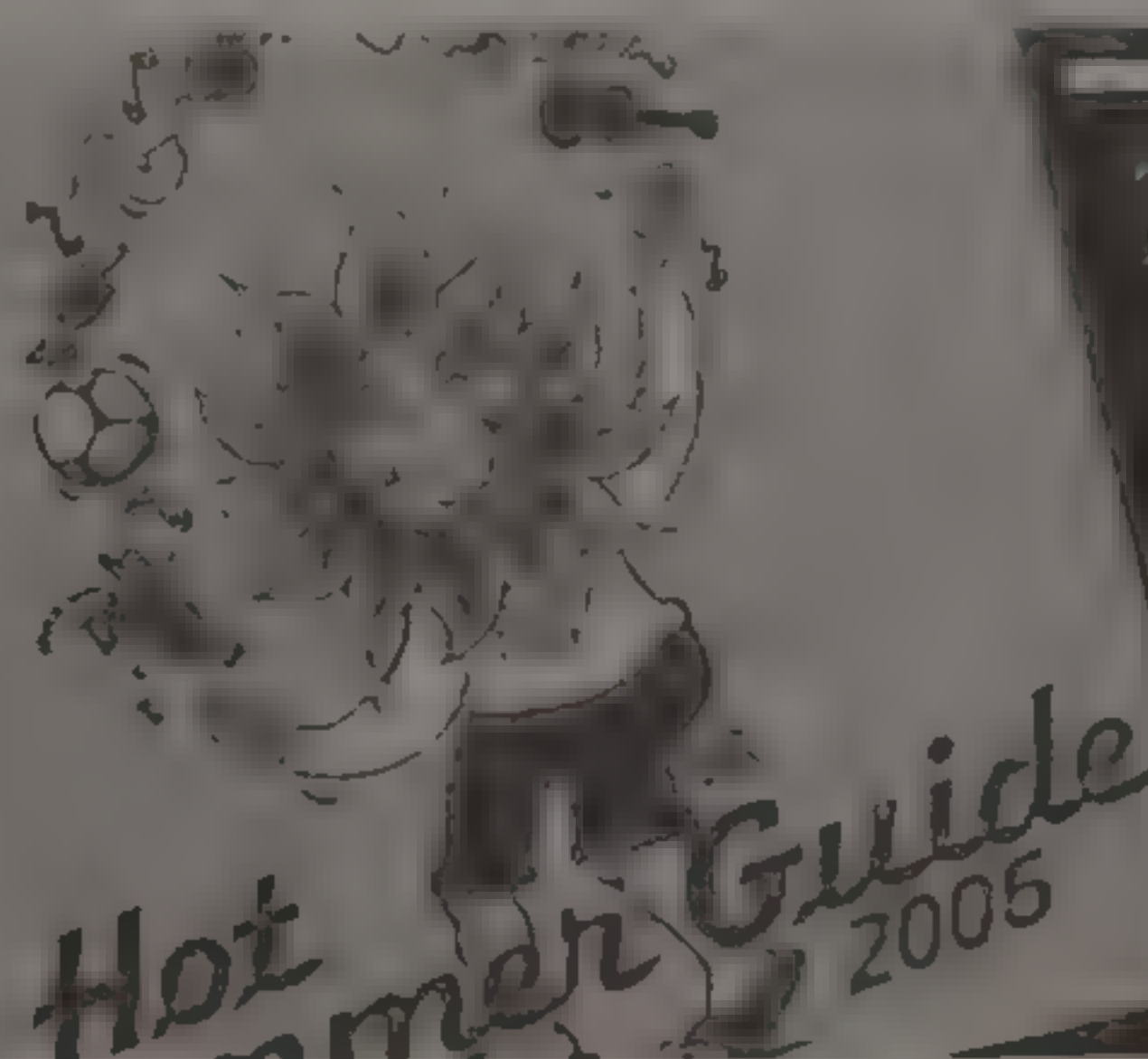


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Blue Plate definitely worth the wait

Continued from page 24

snapper (\$14). Decision made, I could sit back and survey my surroundings. Dotting the other 20 or so tables were pairs, triples and foursomes of hip urbanites enjoyed their meals. Some were friends, some couples and others were adorable first dates.

I barely had time to catch a buzz from my lemonade before my appetizer arrived in a cloud of mouthwatering garlic. Six plump shrimp, drizzled in butter and herbs, were arranged around a mound of oddly-flavoured "jicama" slaw. The shrimp were firm and delivered a kick of garlic with each bite. My drink's lemon top note promised tasty, thirst-quenching action, while the dark, velvety JD contrasted perfectly with the taste of the shrimp.

There was a bit of a wait for my entrée, which suggested that the

kitchen was as busy and short-staffed as the front. My meal was worth the wait. A generous pile of maple mashed yams and some sautéed veggies accented the pièce de resistance: a thin slice of tender, breaded fish under caramelized salsa and a heavy dose of cilantro.

The light-tasting white fish flaked away easily with the slightest pressure of my fork. The crunchy cornmeal exterior was a treat, but the real find was in the unexpected bursts of juicy spiciness from my delicious caramelized salsa. That sensational zing could deliver a punch to almost any entrée. This may just be the start of a garnishing revolution!

I STUFFED MYSELF. At the end, my head spinning, I found myself alone with the dessert menu and a thick, rich mocha with a thick head of whipped cream (\$4). Seductive

options included my beloved pecan pie and a raspberry velvet torte made with Bernard Callebaut chocolate (\$7) that I simply couldn't resist.

In moments, the torte was delivered and the world ceased to exist. It was almost too dense to drive my fork through, but simply dissolved in my mouth. For a few minutes, I tasted paradise. I exulted in the fact that I didn't have to share a single bite.

For \$42 plus tip, I savoured an extravagant dinner with two drinks and three amazing courses. Unfortunately, the hiring environment in Edmonton has taken its toll on this little gem: the Blue Plate Diner has cancelled its popular morning breakfasts and you may wait a few minutes for service. Check out the Friday night specials and the weekend brunch should not be missed.

Maybe next time, I'll bring my wife. Maybe. ♥

Theatre popcorn still tops the pops

Continued from previous page

and had a recipe for popcorn party mix on the side of the box. We were all disturbed by its weird yellow colour when popped, which was likely meant to mimic butter's cheerful presence. Although as fluffy as its Light Natural sister, it had a serious chemical taste that nobody favoured.

Orville Redenbacher's Redenbudders (the most expensive at \$1.20 per bag) alleged it would give us the wonderful aroma and great taste of movie-theatre popcorn in the comfort of our home. It fared slightly better in our taste test, with one friend choosing it as his favourite. To its credit, it did have a small amount of real butter on the ingredient list.

Act II Butter Lover's (0.90 cents per bag) claimed to have "the perfect blend of rich butter flavour and just the right amount of salt." It was a clear loser in our investigation, com-

ing in last among our microwave products. Every single tester found it too salty, and it was notably greasy.

There was no question that my friends could identify the fakes. Made with hydrogenated soy oil and artificial flavour and colour, they really didn't give butter a run for its money.

What became clear from our investigation, however, was that not everybody wanted the same thing from a popcorn snack. I wanted to find a conveniently prepared popcorn that tasted like its been smothered in genuine butter. Some of my friends simply wanted a treat that had as little fat as possible. Others found the faux butter to be just fine.

My conclusion was that if you want genuine butter taste at home, use butter. Pop it on the stove, in the microwave or with your air popper and add whatever amount of butter your heart surgeon has approved—and enjoy. ♥

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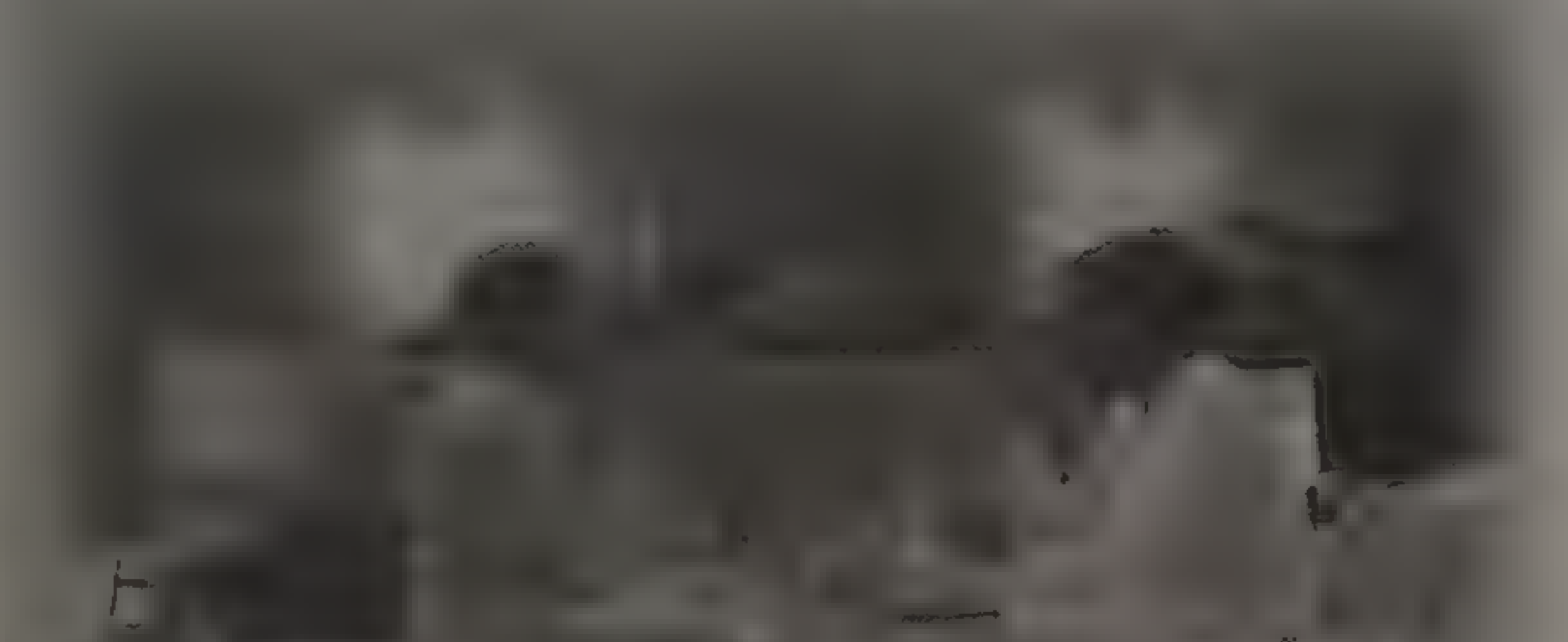
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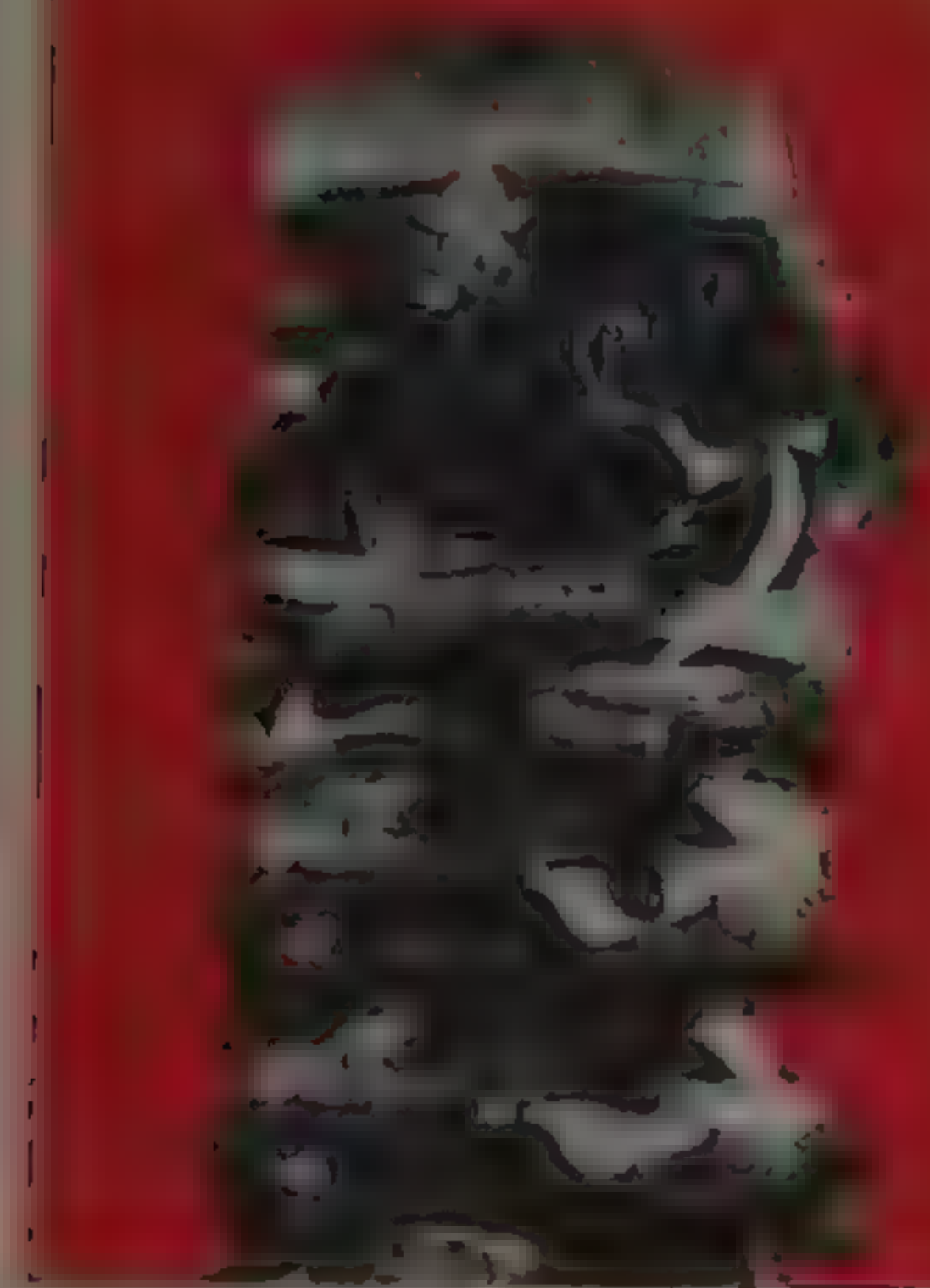
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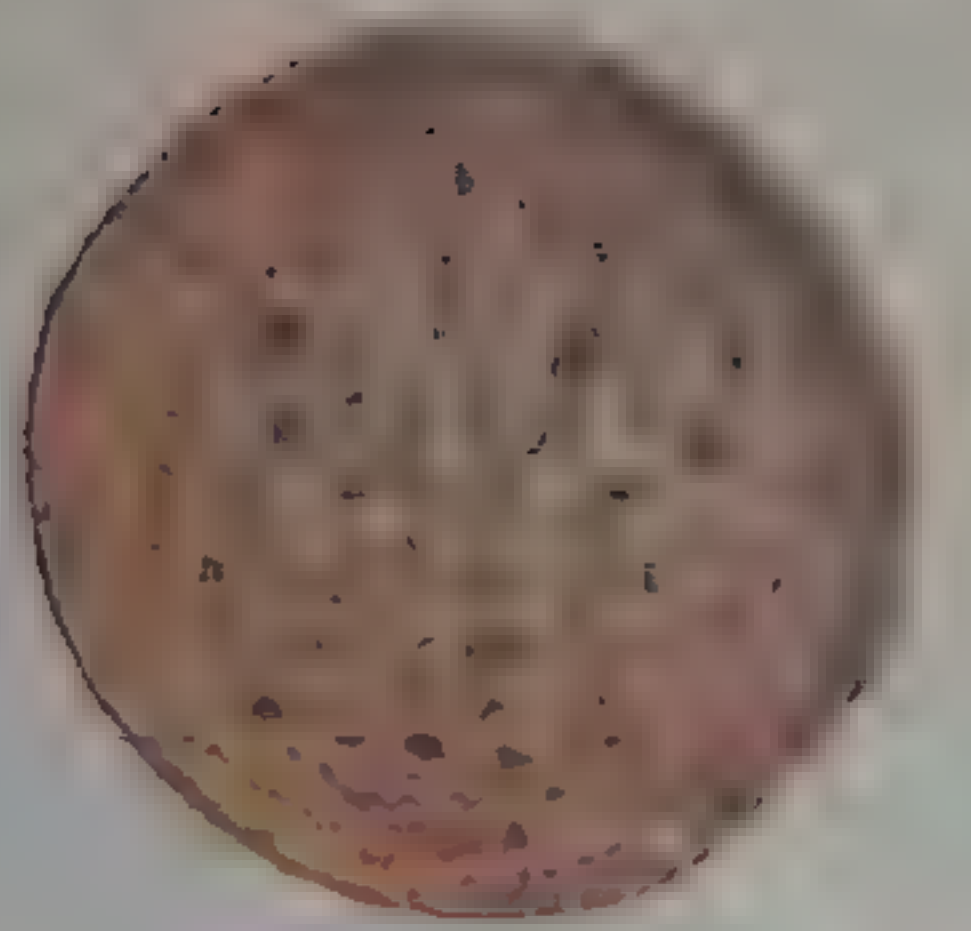


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PIZZA 73

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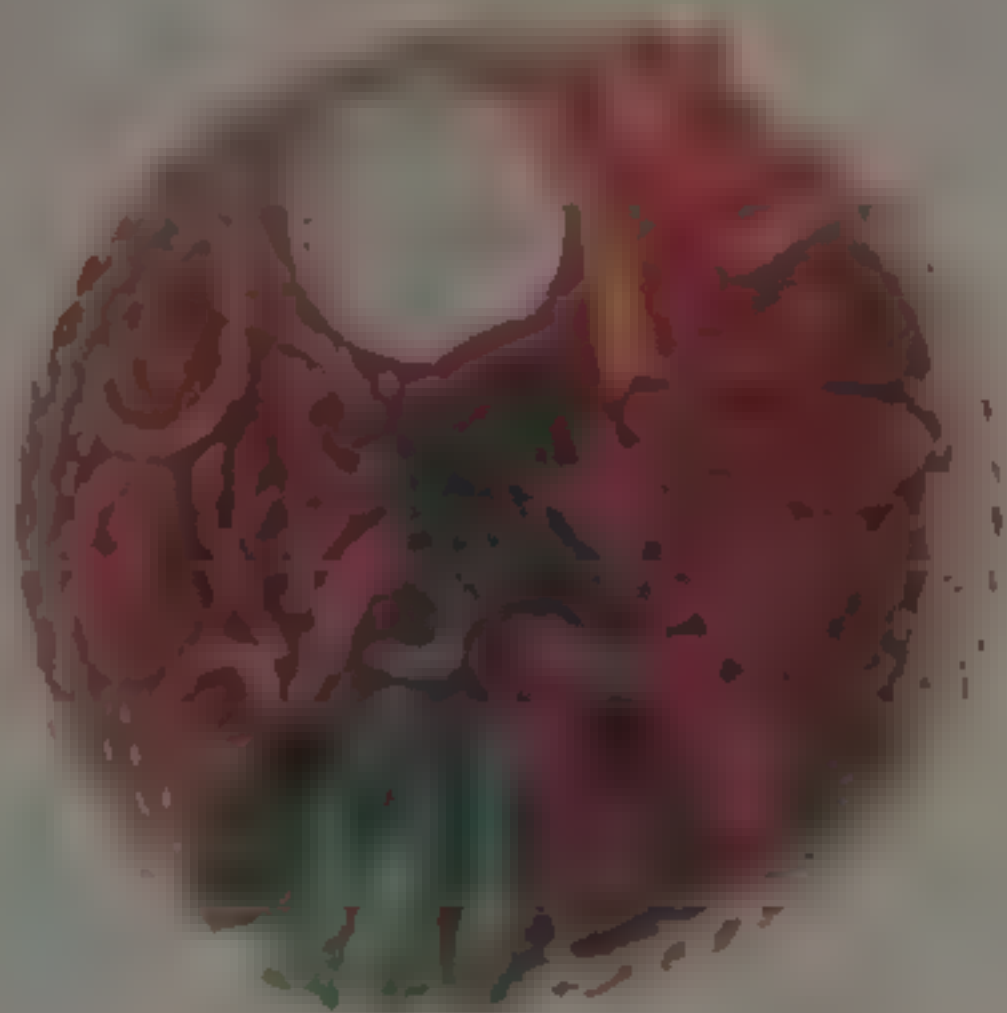
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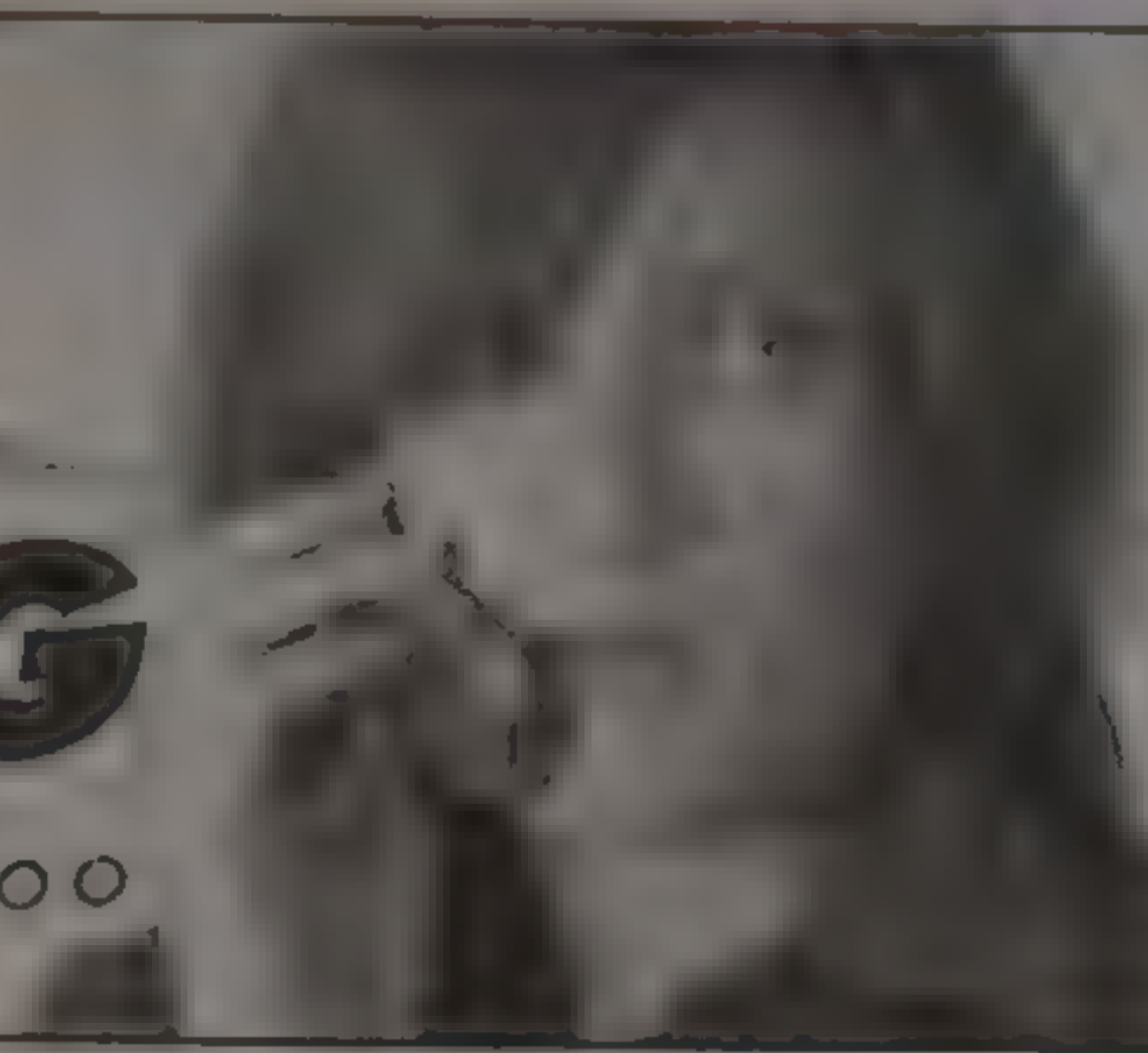


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¿Yo quiero taco, bella?

INNER CITY EATERY BROADENS MORE THAN JUST CULINARY HORIZONS

CHRISTOPHER THRALL / dish@vuwweekly.com

To be honest, I probably never would have gone to El Rancho on my own.

The suburban-raised, white-bread yuppie in me feels anxious on 118th Avenue. It's not just that I fear for my life, car or wallet: I feel distinctly uncomfortable facing (and somewhat responsible for) the yawning social chasm that separates me from the area's residents.

However, the stunning half-Mexican receptionist at my new day job told me that the place reminds her mother of home. Recommendations don't come any stronger than that.

With only a few of its tables filled, the tiny restaurant felt open and airy as we entered and took our seats at 5:30 on a Saturday night. Authentic Latin American *tchotchkes* hung from peach-coloured walls. We had the lightest complexions in the room, and Spanish flowed like music from every group.

Our busy young server dropped off menus with a smile. There wasn't a huge selection, and I only recognized about a third of the dishes, but the list promised a fiesta on our bland *norteamericano* taste buds.

APPETIZERS ranged up to \$10 and four heartily-described soups were very tempting, but we were more interested in combining El Racho's intoxicating novelty with food we could at least recognize. We made our discoveries halfway down the list of entrées. I picked the burrito al carbon (\$8.95) and my wife took the enchilada Mexicana (\$8.95). We chose the flautas Mexicana (\$5.95) from the appetizer menu to share with our daughter. (My suave attempt at a flawless Spanish accent went embarrassingly awry when I pronounced the "x" in "Mexicana." Twice. Our grinning server corrected me cheerfully. Both times.)

I ordered a glass of the house red

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(\$4.75) and my wife, with uncharacteristic adventurousness, ordered a Cola Champagne (\$2.15). We asked about the Jugos d'El Rancho (\$2), and my daughter immediately picked a glass of fresh-squeezed pineapple (*piña*) juice.

Suddenly, El Rancho got busy. A large group of Hispanic men started pushing tables together and we graciously moved. We were just in time, since four or five smaller groups and couples filtered in to fill the rest of the restaurant. At about the same time, someone replaced Shakira's greatest hits on the stereo with more traditional mariachi music.

Our drinks arrived shortly, and we had some pleasant surprises. My wife's Cola turned out to be identical to that syrupy-sweet cream soda of our youths in every way except its neon orange hue. The pineapple juice was a rich and thirst-quenching treat that my daughter refused to release, which was fine since I felt the same way about my glass of Chilean Gato Negro. It was a berry-infused, full-bodied wine that filled my palate and stayed there.

Our dishes arrived quickly as well, since the kitchen was desperately trying to clear their orders for the rush. Spicy aromas lifted off each plate and we all shared a grin before we dove in.

THE FLAUTAS WERE three crunchy, deep-fried chicken rolls wrapped in thin tortilla shells. I stole some of the sour cream to mix with the refried beans and lean strips of beef inside

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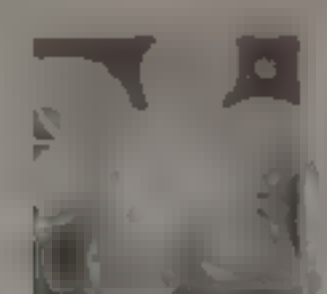
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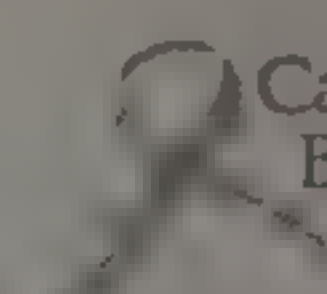
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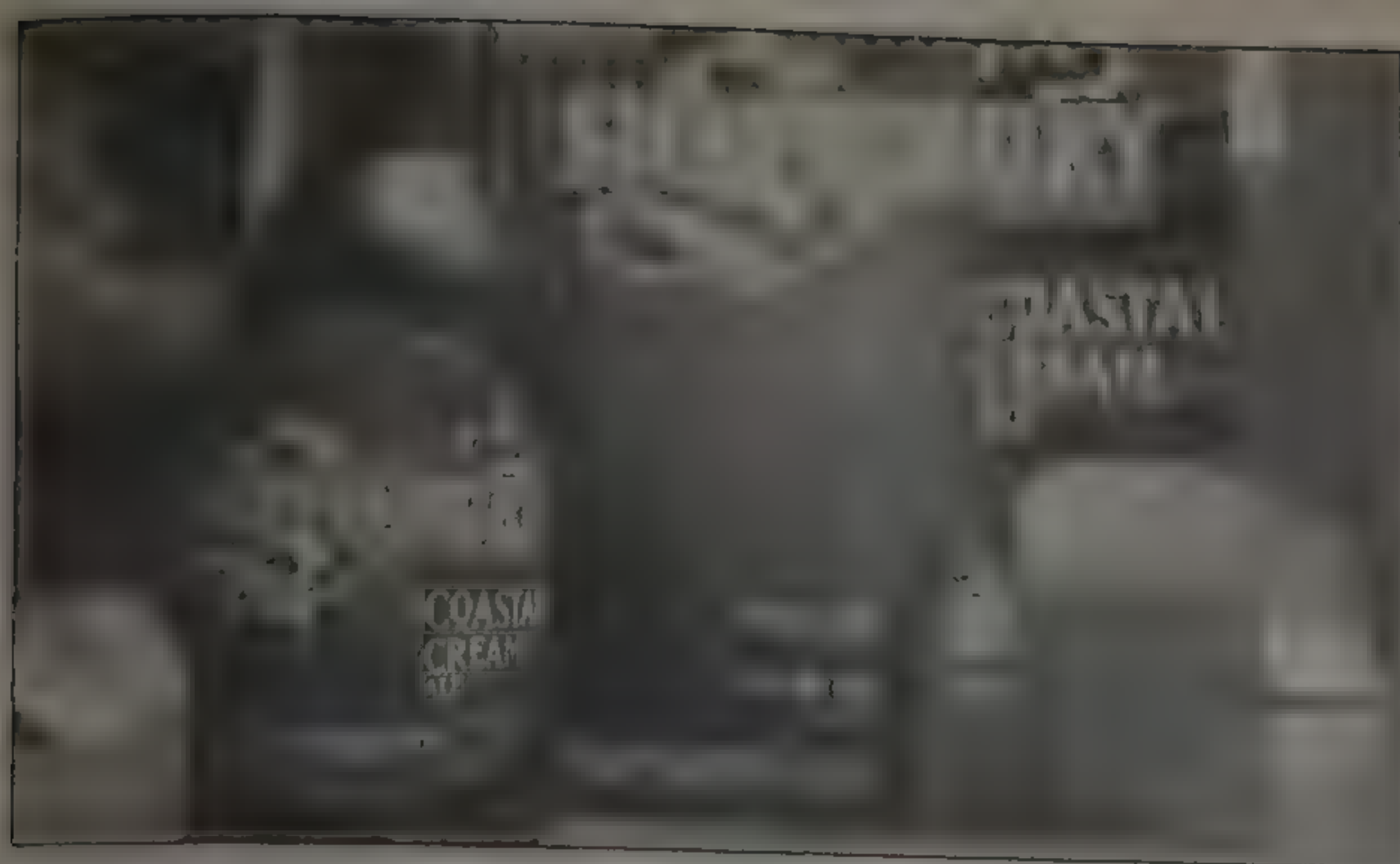
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Getting the Shaft from a faux microbrewery

SUDS! GREAT HEAD

JASON FOSTER
greathead@vancouverweekly.com

**SHAFTEBURY COASTAL CREAM
SHAFTEBURY BREWING (SLEEMAN),
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In the late '80s and early '90s, Canada's Left Coast sprouted dozens of microbreweries. These small-scale craft brewers were committed to real beer, quality ingredients and full taste. The movement provided a world of new flavours and beer styles for the Canadian beer drinker. Thank goodness.

Of course, once the big boys catch on to something, they move quickly. Most of those independent craft brewers in BC are now owned by one of the big three Canadian breweries. Of course, in the interests of marketing, their original labels and brands remain. They spout the proud call to "think globally, drink locally" by misleading thousands of unsuspecting beer drinkers.

A perfect example is Shaftebury Brewing out of Delta. An upstart in 1987, they

attempted to brew solid, commercially viable beer for awaiting beer palates with some success. They were bought out by Sleeman in 1999.

Their anchor brand remains Coastal Cream Ale, a mild brown ale with a creamy mouthfeel.

A deep amber, almost copper beer, Coastal Cream can't seem to decide what it wants to be. The aroma offers very little enticement. When you sip, you pick up some chocolate and nutty malt notes and a mild brown ale flavour. Not too much, mind you. There is little hop to speak of, and the finish is watery.

There is nothing unpleasant in this beer. But neither is there anything to make you want to consume two or three in a row. In a pub it might be an acceptable starter, but don't try to anchor an evening's drinking on it.

One of the major problems of big breweries buying out micros is that they mess with the recipe. They water down the beer's impression to make it more palatable for mass consumption. Unfortunately, this takes all its character and leaves an insipid, uninspiring beer.

I wonder what Shaftebury Coastal Cream Ale was like in 1987 ... probably much more impressive. ▼

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

my own flour tortilla. I had no idea how I was going to finish the enormous sides of spiced rice and salad under a tangy vinaigrette after I devoured my burrito.

My wife's enchilada was even better. The corn tortilla wrapped lovingly around tender pieces of chicken and the whole was baked to a turn. She solved her portion problem by simply ignoring her rice and salad.

I savoured the last few bites of refried beans with as much gusto as my first few, then made a cardinal mistake: since I hadn't actually undone my belt, I felt I probably had room for dessert.

Unfortunately, the labour-intensive deep fried ice cream was unavailable on such a busy night, so we settled for the flan (\$2.50) to share. I was a little disappointed with the smallish, jiggling dessert when it arrived. A single taste changed my mind.

It was delicately flavoured and

whispered across my tongue on the way to the pleasure centres of my brain. The custard supported a caramelized sugar *au jus* that definitely violated some international convention on the maximum sweetness permitted in a single dessert. While I scribbled my notes, my wife and daughter scampered most of the flan.

After such an excellent conclusion, there was nothing to do but roll ourselves out the door. Our bill came to under \$40, which was patently ridiculous, so I left \$50 and all my change before following my family to our bright yellow car. It remained unstolen.

In the gathering summer dusk, the neighbourhood felt a little more welcoming. The lurking residents seemed less ominous and the Report-a-John signs gleamed with a nobility of purpose. Where Air-1 and urban improvement efforts failed, a meal at El Rancho succeeded in reclaiming the area for the yuppie writhing in inherited social guilt: I will return, and I encourage you to check it out. ▼

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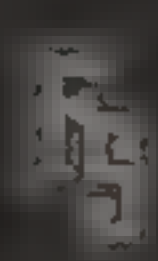
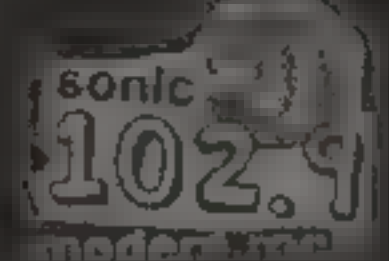
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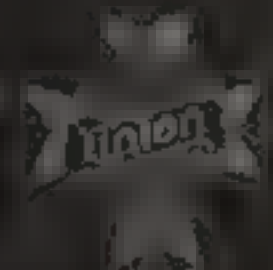
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Twenty-five years and still all about the artists

A SILVER ANNIVERSARY DOESN'T CHANGE A THING FOR FESTIVAL DIRECTOR MIKI STRICKER

DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com

Miki Stricker pauses. Her eyes widen. She starts, almost spitting out the words. She leans her head back, still thinking. Finally, she has it.

"Wind in Her Sails. There, that's four."

The challenge has been met. But I don't think there was every any doubt in my mind that the Fringe Festival director, fresh off a night when she was only at her office until 11pm, was going to be able to name half the shows playing at the Varscona, even if it was a tossed-off challenge that came up only when I couldn't remember all eight shows I was supposed to be reviewing this year.

Despite the fact this year's Fringe has some 159 companies putting on shows in over 30 indoor and outdoor venues, I'd put money on Stricker being able to name damn near every actor who'll be stepping under the spotlight this year: this

PREVIEW

THU AUG 17 - SUN AUG 27
EDMONTON INTERNATIONAL
FRINGE FESTIVAL
OLD STRATHCONA

woman cares about her artists, with the type of zeal and passion you can pretty much only find in a person tasked with running the world's second-largest alternative theatre festival.

"Well, we're a non-curved, non-censored festival: we pick our artists through lottery and first-come, first-serve. One hundred per cent of ticket sales go to the artist. At its heart, that's what the Edmonton Fringe is based on, those are the ideals that were instilled from the get-go, and we won't ever stray from that," Stricker says, shrugging off the idea there's something unique in her passion. "Although we might have grown in scope and size, we're still the same festival at

our heart, and we'll always be that festival."

WHATEVER STRICKER might say, though, it's hard to believe that the only difference between this year's 25th-anniversary *Hi-Yo Fringe, Away!* and the original incarnation a quarter-century ago is time. Started by Brian Paisley as a way to get Edmonton's theatre community through the lean months of summer, the Fringe has ballooned into a festival that's so big it's really only about theatre if you want it to be—but of course, once you want it to be, you'll never find more theatre as long as you look (well, so long as you don't look in Edinburgh. Ahem.)

For Stricker, though, as ballooned as the Fringe gets—as many people who show up just for corn dogs and comedy, and as many city blocks and expropriated bars get swallowed up to feed the beast—it all means nothing if it isn't serving the artists, and ensuring that our Fringe

keeps its top-ranked reputation as one of the friendliest spaces for theatre folks of all stripes.

"The festival does continue to grow in terms of shows—this year we have more than last year, and we had more than the year before that last year. At the same time, though, any growth that the festival does shouldn't outpace the needs of artists," she explains. "It's important to us that artists are able to make a living coming to this festival. It's not going to be a great living by any stretch of the imagination, but I'm very happy with the fact that last year the average return to the artist was \$4 200 and change, that the average audience size was 76 people.

"That's crazy, that's nuts that the average show was 76 people, and I don't want to lose that," Stricker adds. "I don't want to grow for the sake of growth: we have to make sure, always that first and foremost this is an artist's festival and they're making a go of it." ▽

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No wonder they call it the Fringe Festival

THE SCORPION GIRL, GAY PUPPETS AND NAZIS IN DRAG ALL FIND A HOME ON STAGE AT *HI-YO FRINGE, AWAY*

DAVID BERRY / david@vuweekly.com

The image of a jack-booted SS officer slipping into a cocktail dress isn't something you come across every day. And for local playwright Darren Hagen, that's exactly why it belongs at the Edmonton Fringe Festival.

"As soon as I typed the words 'gay nazi musical' into Google, I knew I had a good Fringe play," says Hagen with his usual boisterous laugh. "The story really does have the perfect elements of a Fringe play. I'm always looking for an excuse to put boys in drag, and when it's Nazi boys in drag, well—how can you pass that up?"

Fresh off the success of last year's acidic *BitchSlap!*, Hagen's newest Fringe work is *The Neo-Nancies: Hitler's Kickline*, a play about the 1942 Nazi musical *Die Grosse Liebe*, which starred Nazi chanteuse Zarah Leander and featured a grand finale of—this is entirely true—an elite platoon of SS officers dressed like chorus girls dancing behind her.

Of course, leave it to the Fringe to make even Nazis in support hose look downright normal. Though spare character studies, one-handed tour de forces and dialogue-driven sketch comedy might be the main course at *Hi-Yo Fringe, Away*, only the Fringe food stands rival the actual festival for diverse options to toss on your plate.

Take, for instance, actor/playwright Berend McKenzie's new play—his first—*Get Off the Cross, Mary*. A tale of

a gay man coming to grips with religion isn't exactly anything new; when that gay man's a puppet, though, and he decides to take on religion by staging a queer disco re-telling of *The Passion of the Christ*—well, welcome to Fringe time.

"At first I wasn't quite sure about using puppets, but now I don't think there's any other way it could work," he explains of his puppets, which he designed with the help of a friend from Vancouver who used to work with the Muppets. "Puppets can say things that are actually quite jarring, just really scandalous, but they allow it to be really funny, or at least not that bad. When a puppet swears, it's actually really funny."

AND WHILE MCKENZIE might be aiming for humour, Ron Pearson is out to scare you with his latest, *Scorpion Girl*. One of the last remaining members of a scorpion family created when the US began atomic testing in the South Pacific, *Scorpion Girl* is the latest in Pearson's string of freaks and oddities from around the world.

"This is really is the most frightening thing we've ever done, and probably the most frightening thing people will ever see," says Pearson with his tongue in cheek.

Kidding aside, though, for Pearson *Scorpion Girl* is a chance to indulge his love of the carnival sideshow—an art that's certainly dwindling but nonetheless right at home in the middle of the Fringe.

"I fell in love with this kind of stuff as a kid, when the old Royal American midways used to come to town. I was scared to death of them, of course, but they were also always so interesting—you always go in to see the headless bikini girl," he explains. "When I saw the mini-donut stands at the Fringe, saw everything surrounding it, I just knew the atmosphere would be totally conducive to it."

And it's that atmosphere—sans mini-donuts—that encourages both Hagen and McKenzie as well. The Fringe, for them, is the type of place where people understand that unique stagings or outlandish plots are just new ways of striking at the heart of theatre: telling stories that deserve to be told.

"For me, this is a chance to do queer theatre about a pretty major event in queer history that nobody knows about," explains Hagen. "And it's also a chance to look at just how queer the Nazis were—and let me tell you, those posters, with blond boys in uniforms, just scream it."

"I was really just frustrated with politicians bringing up the whole gay rights/gay marriage thing as a way to divert attention from the real topics," says McKenzie of the genesis of his play. "I've heard a lot of talk about how Christ wouldn't love gays, you know, and the puppets really just give me a chance to put a different spin on a pretty sensitive subject, and the Fringe is a great place to take on those subjects." ▼

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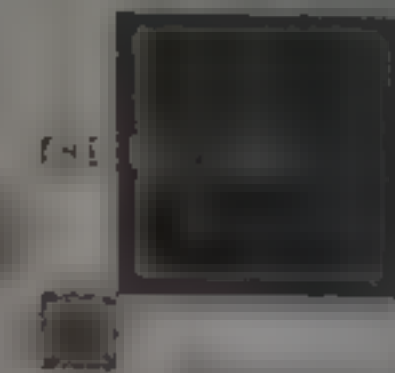


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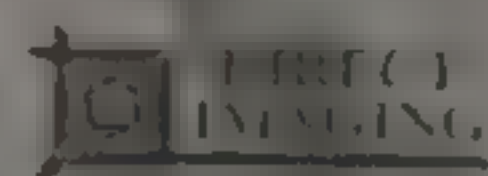
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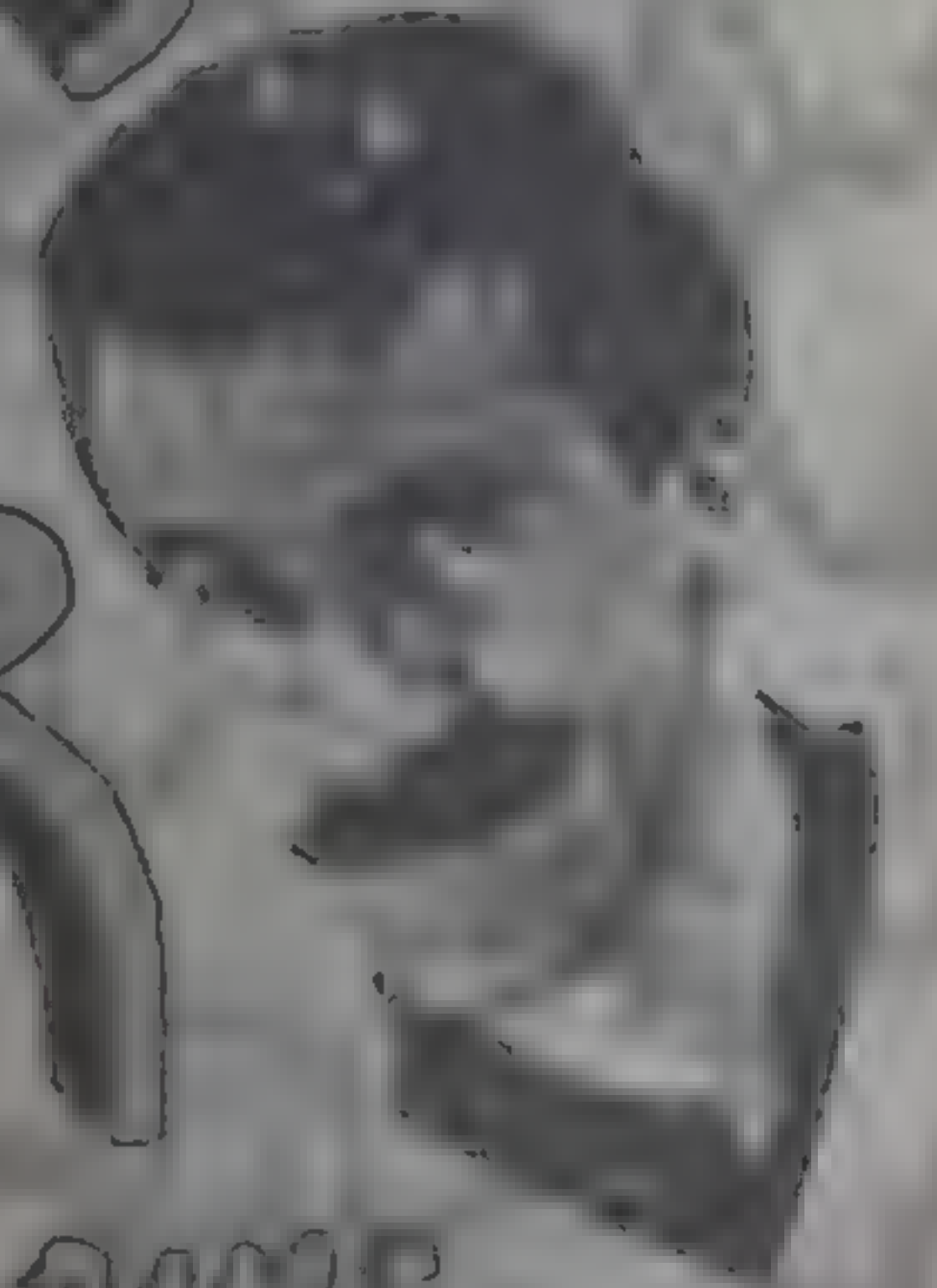
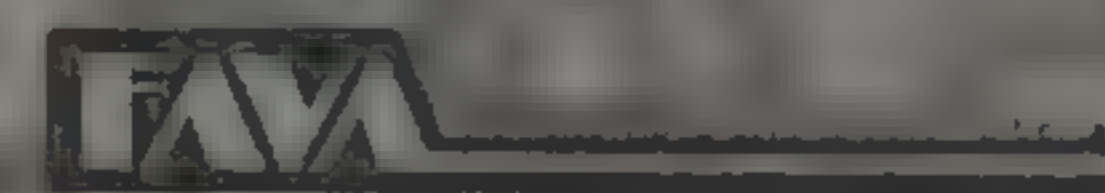
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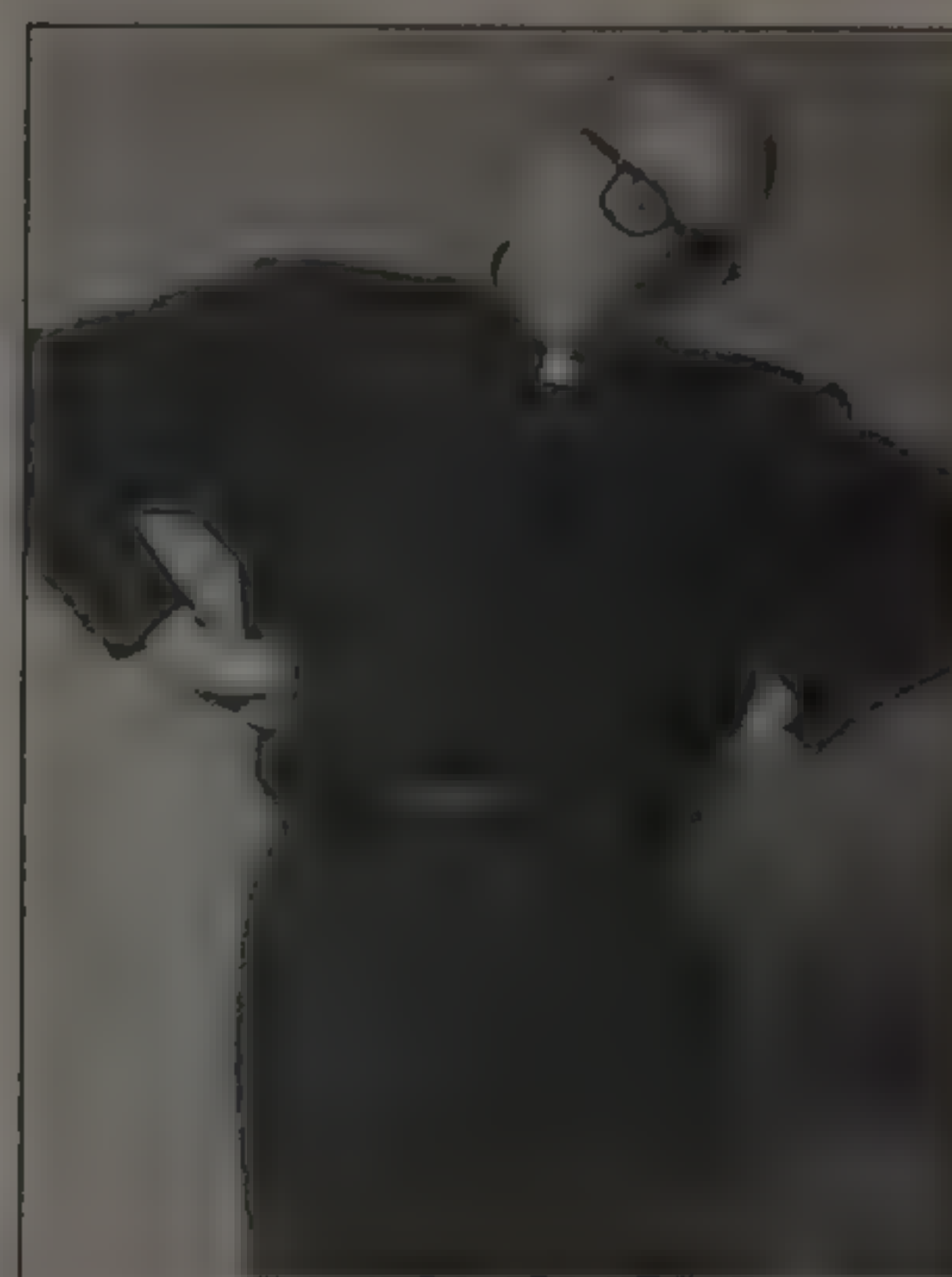
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VUE
WEEKLYIf you're only going
to see one play ...THEATRE TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR
AT THIS YEAR'S FRINGEDAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com

Noteworthy past performance, it is worth mentioning, is no guarantee of future success. With nothing else to go on but a \$6 program and enthusiastic actors, though, it's as good an indicator as any for planning your Fringe fest.

So, short of the pita people divining a way to read the entrails of their rotating tube-meats, here are a selection of Fringe shows that come with a pedigree. By no means limit yourself to these—everything great at the Fringe can't possibly be predicted or summed up in advance—but if you've just sat through three hours of bad relationship jokes, these are, in no particular order, safe bets to renew your faith in theatre.

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS
(BLARNEY PRODUCTIONS)
STAGE 8

There isn't another play at this year's Fringe with more expectation behind it than this one. If Wayne Paquette was someone to watch at last year's Fringe, this year he's jumped to that elite level of must-see artists. Taking a very well-deserved Outstanding Fringe Director Sterling for *Afterplay*, he's reunited with the equally lauded John Sproule (Outstanding Actor for his beautifully mannered portrayal of Andrey Prozorov) for a chance at Australian playwright Ron Blair's painfully lifelike one-hander about a Christian schoolteacher. As an added plus, this is inexplicably the play's Canadian debut (it was written in 1975), and in these hands, it should be noteworthy.

BACK TO BERLIN
(DEATH AND TAXES)
STAGE 1

Vern Thiessen has a particular knack for subtleties of individuals—and he's a recipient of some sort of Gov-

ernor General's award, not to mention the new spokesperson for the U of A, even more impressive when you consider the administration seems only vaguely aware they even have an arts program—and since he's once again teamed with Geoffrey Brumlik (*Shakespeare's Will*), this two-part character study should be among the most affecting of the Fringe. Neither Thiessen nor Sproule Richardson gets on stages much any more, but that will probably make their performances that much more unexpected.

*****1/2 BLACKLISTED
(THESE MEN ARE BLACKLISTED)
STAGE 13

If you didn't hear the buzz generated by *****Blacklisted last year, you couldn't possibly have spent time on the Fringe grounds. They got a little bit of a notorious boost thanks to an unappreciative letter-writer who left his sense of humour in Calgary, but they really don't need to resort to gimmicks to advertise themselves: this was one of the most consistently fucking funny shows at a Fringe that boasted more than it rightly should have. For all the crude humour there's also moments that crack whips with cleverness, and if their comedy hasn't gotten even better with a year of refinement, these guys were just being lazy.

ZOMBIES
(SCREWED AND CLUED)
52 PICK-UP
(ENIGMA)
STAGE 11

All Stewart Matthews and Natalie Joy Quesnel, generally better known as Screwed and Clued, seem to do is get rave reviews. *Zombies* has already picked up an Outstanding Original

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

Work award at the Ottawa Fringe and five star reviews in Winnipeg, and 52 Pick-up, which features 52 scenes about a relationship selected at random from a scattering of the cards, promises to be one of the most wildly creative works at this year's Fringe. Do yourself a favour and see both.

MY AMORICO
(THE DESERT BUS COMPANY)
STAGE 2

If the mention of Cagliary's One Yellow Rabbit theatre doesn't make you stop reading, you haven't been paying attention. Calgary playwright Ken Cameron, last seen in town with Workshop West's production of his play *My One and Only* in 2004, hooks up with Yellow Rabbit's Andy Curtis for a play about loss while adrift in another country. Cameron hasn't been in a while, but it is a love story which should count for something.



MULES
(BENT OUT SHAPE)
STAGE 9

Just the idea of Beth Graham and Daniela Vlaskalic sharing the stage together is worthy of note, given the impressive body of work underneath

both of their feet (Graham's heart-breaking delicate turn in KYT's *Glass Menagerie*, Vlaskalic was excellent in Stewart Lemoine's *Zenith of the Empire*). When you find out they're back to writing, though, and have enlisted Kevin Corey (Black Rider) and Kevin Sutley (also KYT) to help put them together, though, this has to be high on the list of plays to see. If Sterlings were awarded on reputation alone, this is already a front-runner.

SEE BOB RUN
(BURN IN FULL THEATRE)
STAGE 11

Daniel MacIvor's work is uniquely suited to the Fringe atmosphere, sparse and simple but helplessly provocative as well. That means absolutely nothing, of course, if there isn't talent to produce it, and it's in ample supply here. Elena Porter outperformed most of her roles at Nextfest, but the really intriguing name here is designer Clinton Carew

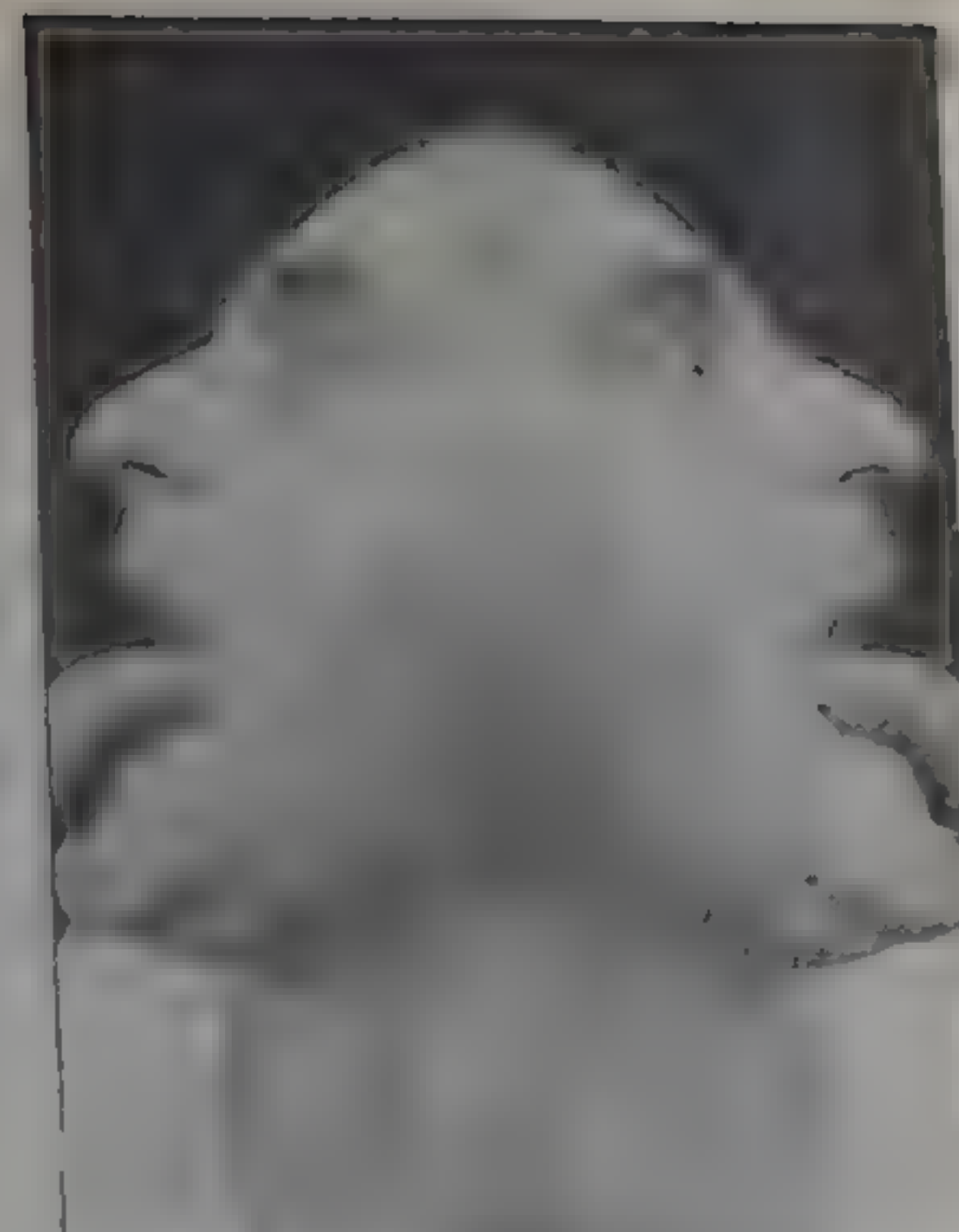
He's kept a low profile in the theatre community the last while, but every time his head pops up, something starts crackling, and given a shot at MacIvor, the results are sure to be interesting.

NEO-NANCIES: HITLER'S KICKLINE
(GUYS IN DISGUISE)
BYOV C

It's Guys in Disguise. Trevor Schmidt is back after slapping the bitch out of Bette Davis. Jesse Gervais will probably be in a can-can dress. And it's about Nazis. In drag. If this doesn't sound fun to you, just get a corn dog and go home.

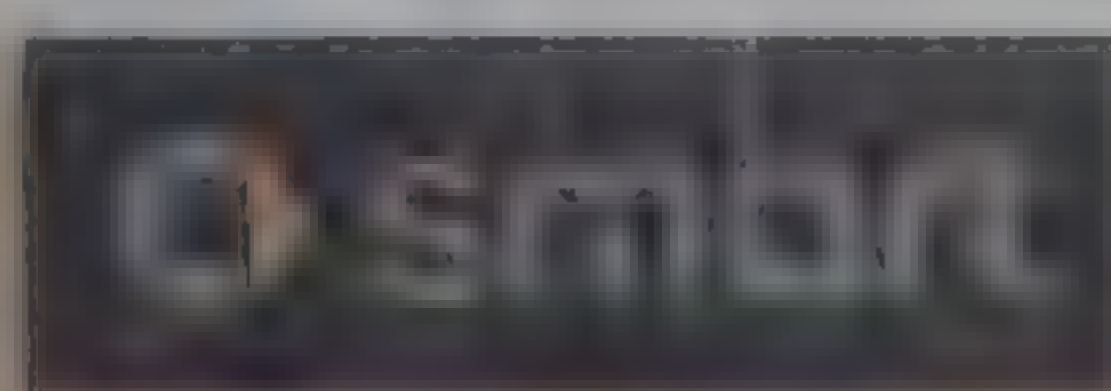
JEM ROLLS OFF THE TONGUE
(BIG WORD PERFORMANCE POETRY)
BYOV B

Speaking as someone who sees the words "performance poetry" and keeps right on flipping through the program guide, I never would have given Jem Rolls the time of day had I



not been pulled in by a chance street preaching. Far more literate and poignant than anyone with his charm has any right to be, Rolls is a talented enough poet that he doesn't need to read it on stage, but a charismatic enough performer that he could be reading a wine list and catch your attention. Terrific stuff. ♥

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Acting Up is so good,
you might not even
need to go the Fringe

DAVID BERRY / david@vuwweekly.com

I've never felt worse for being a Fringe reviewer. For one seven-minute stretch right in the middle of *The Fringe—Acting Up*, a new documentary shot on location at last year's Fringe, the humble critic, doom-penned destroyer of innocent Fringe dreams, is openly mocked, derisively laughed-at, accused of misunderstanding the artist, and, in a final, fatal blow, called mean.



THIS ROCKS

It weighs on the mind of anyone who will spend the next weekend locked in BYOVs and converted community halls attempting to make sense of the 150-headed screaming monster that is our Fringe: these people really don't like us, especially as the star counts diminish.

But that boiling undercurrent of loathing is just one of the things *Acting Up* has managed to capture so well about Edmonton's Fringe: from haphazard tech sessions to ham-fisted promo attempts to the sun-drenched apathy of the beer gardens, director Neil Grahn and writer Michael Chyz pinpoint everything but the green onion cakes on a 48-minute tour of Edmonton's Fringe.

TOLD THROUGH THE EYES of the performers trying to make a go of it, *Acting Up* picks through a select group of Fringe archetypes—with a particular focus on sketch comedy—to soak up the atmosphere. There are near-burned-out Fringe vets Three Dead Trolls in a Baggie, whose haphazard attempt at filming a television pilot live on stage nearly drives them to quitting.

There's the satisfied bitchery of festival favourites Guys in Disguise, who have just as much fun vamping it up for bikers outside Tim Horton's as they do snarling at each other on stage in *BitchSlap!* Festival mainstays Die-Nasty make an appearance toward the end, and the boys from Blacklisted, two years away from being Fringe favourites, capture the spirit of reckless abandonment that

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The most interesting, though, is the flame-outs: as much as the Fringe is about providing a venue for talent and bringing provocative, engaging theatre to a mass audience, we've all been stuck in a humourless comic re-telling of being sassy and single in the city, or an over-enunciated one-man show about the dad who never hugged.

Those are represented by LA comedian Yolanda Yott and the local troupe who put on *MoonSnake*, both of whom feel the sting of near-empty theatres and poor reviews. The locals put on a brave face, drowning sorrows in sunshine and beer and vowing to return next year, while Yott—whose one-woman show *Having My Cabaret and Eating It Too* looked like a sure-fire misfire from the get-go, even if I hadn't known it was one of the worst-reviewed at last year's Fringe—resorts to whining and pointing out that it was her "first Fringe show, ever!" and ends with a promise to never return to Edmonton.

But it's precisely the mashed-up milieu—sketch comics mixing piercing satire with dick jokes, serious actors stumbling on stage after just having thrown up from drinking, an inept first-timer following one of the most heart-wrenching pieces of theatre that will be done in Edmonton all year—that makes the Fringe so fascinating. And Grahn's and Chyz's documentary lets it all breathe and come to life on its own.

It's enough to make you want to burst right out of the theatre and soak up every bit of Fringe you can—even if you're just an asshole critic. ▾

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ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM 12845-102 Ave, www.royalalbertamuseum.ca • **SATISFACTION GUARANTEED:** How consumer goods were brought to Western Canada from 1880-1960; until Sept. 4 • **FROM GEISHA TO DIVE: THE KIMONOS OF ICHIMARU:** Kimonos, sashes, wigs, combs, fans, sandals and other belongings of Ichimaru providing insight into

women's history in Japan; until Sept. 4

SCOTT GALLERY 10411-124 St (488-3619) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • **AUGUST EXHIBITION:** Featuring works by Carol and Richard Selfridge and new sculptures by David Mitchell • Until Sept. 5

SNAP GALLERY 10309-97 St (423-1492) • Open Tue-Sat 12-5pm • **LOVE THOSE CLOTHES YOU WEAR:** Music with DJ Aims, Turkish food, and an auction of clothing handmade by local artists. Silent auction fundraiser, proceeds to support SNAP's programming; Aug. 19 (8pm); free • **TRACHEA AND THE HERO, AND OTHER SUCH STORIES...** Solo exhibition of works by Edmonton print artist Helen Gerritzen; Aug. 25-Oct. 7; opening reception: Thu, Sept. 7 (7-9pm)

VAAA GALLERY 3rd Fl, Harcourt House, 10215-112 St (421-1731) • Open Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm; Sat 12-4pm • **ALBERTA WIDE SHOW 2006:** Award winning artworks by members; until Aug. 26

VANDERLEELIE GALLERY 10183-112 St (452-0286) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5:30pm, Thu 10am-8pm • **SUMMER GROUP SHOW:** Recent works by artists including Isla Burn Clay Ellis, Susanna Espinoza, James Laker, Peter von Tiesenhausen, Robert Wiseman, Karen Cantine, Linda Lindemann, Wesley Anderson, Barbara Hirst, Jen Bowes, and Carolyn Campbell

LITERARY

AUDREY'S BOOKS 10702 Jasper Ave (423-3487) • Book launch of *Earth Alive: Essays on Ecology* by Stan Rowe. Reading by editor Don Kerr • Thu, Aug. 24 (7:30pm)

COWBOY POETRY GATHERING Stony Plain (963-5998) • Featuring poets Doris Daley, Sue Harris, Howard Norskog, Floyd Bear, Jake Peters and Ben Crane, Fred Miller, Frank Gleeson, Carmen Lindsay, Tammy Gislason, Stewart Macdougall, and Bryn Thiessen as well as many others • August 18-20 • \$1 (daily pass)/\$30 (weekend pass)/\$5 (Friday night no BBQ)/\$20 (Friday night with BBQ)

NAKED CYBER CAFÉ 10354 Jasper Ave • Music, poetry, and performance art open stage hosted by the Naked Eclectic Electric Orchestra • Every Thu (8pm)

LIVE COMEDY

THE COMEDY FACTORY 3414 Gateway Boulevard (469-4999) • Thu 8:30pm, Fri 8:30pm, Sat 8pm and 10:30pm • Chris Warren; Aug. 17-19 • Bob Beddow; Aug. 24

THE COMIC STRIP 1646 Bourbon St, WEM 8882-170 St (483-5999) • Open: nightly 8pm, Fri 8pm and 10:30pm, Sat 8pm and 10:30pm, Sun 8pm • Robbie Printz from MTV and Comedy Central with Rick Bronson and guests Powerman and *Just For Laughs* hit Andrew Iwanyk; Aug. 17-20 • Hit or miss Mondays; Mon, Aug. 21 • Insane Entertainment: sword swallowing, toaster throwing fun; Tue, Aug. 22 • The Fresh Faces of Stand Up; Wed, Aug. 23 • From MuchMusic's *Video On Trial*: The comedy hi-jinx of Debra DiGiovanni along with The Bear's Paul Brown and guest Mike Patterson; Aug. 24-27 • Hit or Miss Mondays amateurs take the stage; Mon, Aug. 28 • Get Sick and Twisted with Insane Entertainment sword swallowing, and toaster throwing fun; Tue, Aug. 29 • Star of *Going the Distance*, it's *Just for Laughs* favourite Ryan Belleville with guests; Aug. 30-Sept. 3

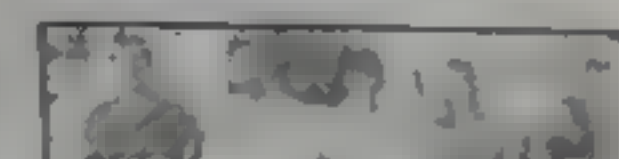
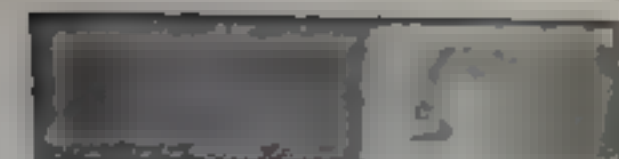
YUK YUK'S COMEDY KABARET Londonderry Mall (481-9857) • Open: Wed-Fri 8pm, Sat 8pm and 10:30pm, Sun 8pm • Wed Get Your Yuk's, professional comedy night: \$5 • Sun: Pro Am Comedy Jam and Industry Night: \$10 • Brad Muise, Sean Lecomber and Harold Preuss; Aug. 16-20

THEATRE

BUTCH, SUNDANCE AND THE GANG Jubiliations Dinner Theatre, WEM, 8882-170 St (484-2424) • Aug. 18-Oct. 22

HI YO FRINGE...AWAY Various venues throughout the Old Strathcona area (409-1910) • Aug. 17-27

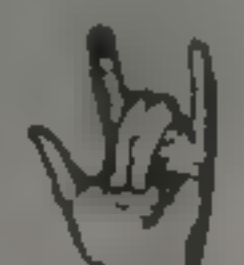
IVANKA CHEWS THE FAT Mayfield Inn, 16615-109 Ave • An hilarious musical revue • Until Aug. 27



Burger uses his *Illusionist* to full effect

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vuweekly.com

Neil Burger's 2002 film *Interview with the Assassin*, in which a dying man sets out to prove he was the second gunman in the murder of JFK, was ambitious, problematic and admirable.



THIS ROCKS

DRAMA

OPENS FRI, AUG 18

THE ILLUSIONIST

DIRECTED BY NEIL BURGER

WRITTEN BY BURGER, STEVEN MILLHAUSER

STARRING EDWARD NORTON, JESSICA BIEL, PAUL GIAMATTI

story and production values, *The Illusionist* still benefits most from precisely the same thing that made its predecessor so memorable: the movie dazzles with possibilities yet never quite gives up its tricks.

Norton plays Eisenheim, the illusionist of the title, the son of a cabinetmaker, drawn from a tender age toward magic, well travelled in exotic locales and very much the detached man of mystery. He astounds audiences with orange trees that grow in seconds, floating balls, vanishing handkerchiefs and a humble lack of showy pretensions.

One night a volunteer from the audience mounts the stage, a fine-featured beauty named Sophie (Jessica Biel) who's engaged to the Crown Prince Leopold (Rufus Sewell), but also a secret childhood love of Eisenheim's he thought he'd never see again.

He performs a strange trick with her, in which her mirror image dies while Sophie herself looks upon her wayward reflection in a trance. An old flame is rekindled, a dark prophecy announced, and, with the jealous

CONTINUES ON PAGE 42



Wordplay crossword nerds are black and white like me

FLICKS

THE MOVIEGOER

PAUL MATWYCHUK

moviegoer@vuweekly.com

Oh Lord, how it all came rushing back to me.

Last week, I went to see *Wordplay*, the new documentary about the subculture of crossword puzzle solvers and constructors. The last section of the film takes place at the 2005 Crossword Puzzle Tournament at the Marriott Hotel in Stamford, Connecticut. It's the final day of the tournament, and director Patrick Creadon includes a brief shot of a group of contestants clustered around a piece of paper taped to the wall and checking out the latest standings.

I doubt that image means much to most people in the audience, but it unleashed a whole flood of memories for me. I've never participated in the Stamford Crossword Tournament, but boy, did I ever want to—especially when I was

younger. I adored crosswords back then. I still do, but I don't work my way through three puzzle magazines a month like I used to. (I constructed crosswords professionally as well, and even had a couple of them published in the *New York Times*.) And I was a *demon* of a solver! *Games* used to publish a selection of Stamford puzzles every year along with a chart that let you compare your solving speed with those of the tournament champions, and let me tell you, I would have given those guys a good run for their money.

Instead, I channeled my love of wordplay—of "making the alphabet dance," to quote the lovely title of a book by Ross Eckler—into competitive Scrabble. And judging from *Wordplay*, the atmosphere at Scrabble tournaments is pretty much identical to the one that exists at Stamford. They tend to take place in the same down-at-heel, brown-carpeted hotel conference rooms. The contestants are drawn from the same batch of weedy, fashion-challenged middle-aged men and women lugging around homemade good

luck charms, fraying tote bags and well-thumbed reference books. The scores are compiled in the same low-tech way: Scrabble tournaments feature lots of wobbly-looking grids hand-drawn in magic marker. And there's the same special air of ... I don't know if this phrase will make sense ... collaborative competition—an outgrowth, perhaps, of the way two Scrabble opponents literally shape their playing field together, or the way the puzzle-maker and the solver need each other to become complete.

AS MUCH AS I LOVED playing Scrabble at that high level—one of these days I'll have to tell you the story of how I won a tournament by playing "ACUATE," a word I wasn't sure even existed—I remember always feeling embarrassed by the intensely nerdy vibe of the whole scene. It was the classic case of the high-school nerd who feels ashamed of his friends even though they're precisely the people who accept him the most. Probably my best Scrabble buddy back then was a

sweet but hyperactive guy named Barry Spinner, who ran the local Scrabble club in Hamilton, Ontario. He must've been twice my age and half my size. I can still remember riding to a tournament in his beat-up station wagon, my feet buried in about three weeks' worth of fast-food wrappers and Styrofoam coffee cups. He barely watched the road; he was too busy studying the list of eight-letter words clutched in his right hand. And he was so un-self-conscious about his lack of cool that his personality almost seemed charmed.

Wordplay isn't terribly deep and it misrepresents the *New York Times* as a crossword leader when in fact it took the *Times* 20 long years to catch up with innovations that had become commonplace in magazines like *Games* and *Dell Champion Crossword Puzzles*. However, Creadon does a magnificent job of portraying the communal spirit of crossword fans—not just the people at Stamford but also the millions of anonymous solvers filling in those little white boxes

all across the country

Most of the reviews for *Wordplay*, disappointingly, have focused on its celebrity interviewees, from Jon Stewart (whose derisive gag about the puzzles in *USA Today* marks him as a true crossword connoisseur) to the Indigo Girls (who have nothing interesting to say about crosswords and who don't even seem terribly proficient at solving them).

I'm really surprised that critics haven't spent more time talking about the Stamford contestants, who are the true heart of the film. I don't just mean adorably geeky top-level solvers like Ellen Ripstein or Trip Payne; I mean the ones in the background, the Barry Spinners, wearing their crossword-puzzle ties, staying up all night merrily playing trivia games in the lobby, performing lame skits and novelty songs at the tournament talent show. God, I wish I was there!

"These are my kind of people," *Times* crossword editor Will Shortz says in the film. Finally, I'm brave enough to admit it: they're my kind of people too. ♥



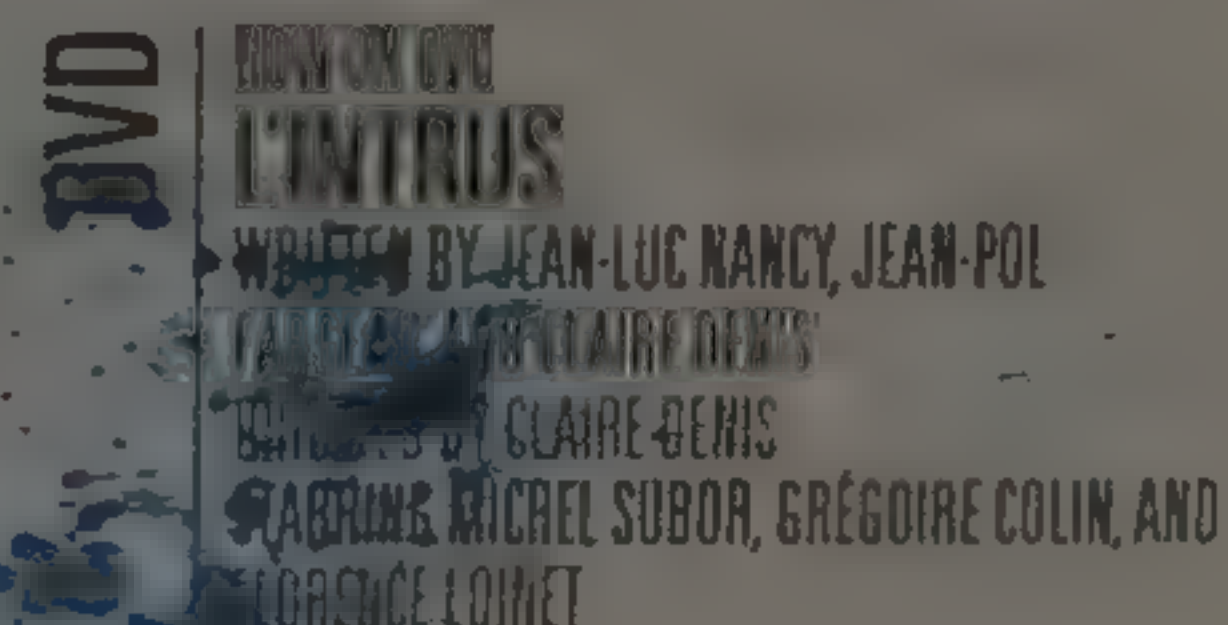
Claire Denis intrudes on a fever-dream

BRIAN GIBSON / brian@vnewweekly.com

French director Claire Denis is one of the best in the world, but her films are increasingly difficult to track down. Good luck finding any of her '90s work, with the exception of *Beau Travail*, a stunning adaptation of Melville's *Billy Budd*.

The DVD of her throbbing romance *Vendredi Soir* can only be found in a few stores in Edmonton and now *L'Intrus* (*The Intruder*) has snuck onto shelves, unnoticed, two years after it first intrigued and confused at the Venice Film Festival.

To call this film "elliptical" or "enigmatic" would be understatement. The story skims over landscapes and slides through dream imagery, seem-



ing to hardly leave any trace of narrative behind. You could watch most of the film without realizing that the cold Louis (Michel Subor), who neglects the son living near him on the mountainous Swiss border with France, has bought a new heart and is seeking out his long-lost other son in Tahiti.

And it would be easy to turn on a film that's so obviously swimming against the mainstream. At times it seems pretentious, ponderous, or

even stubbornly opaque, as if Denis refuses to ever plot out a clearer course for her distant adaptation of French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy's short work about receiving a transplanted heart that slowly rejected him.

But Denis' eye for a sensual, startling, atmospheric shot here is so unerring that the movie may just pull you into its odd, surreal aura. Cinematographer Agnès Godard offers some of the richest images you'll ever see, from the crisp snow on the Alps to the breaking blue surf of the Pacific. People are tied to place: long shots of landscapes or buildings—an early scene reveals son Sidney's (Grégoire Colin) and wife Antoinette's (Florence Loinet) apartment through two windows—alternate with tight, angled

close-ups of people's hands, legs, and the sides of their faces.

THERE'S LITTLE DIALOGUE, but many layers of texture and sound. A playful, restless sensuality flows through the movie, but there's also a taut sense of something ominous lurking just off-screen. The masterly pace, stillness and detail are unnerving, while the soundtrack flares up every so often in a moody stutter of electric guitar or an electronica echo swelling around a drumbeat. Denis follows tangents, from Sidney's and Antoinette's frisky love to Louis' hardy dogs, but they seem to weave into each other, tangling the film into a fever-dream.

Details of scenes in Switzerland reappear in the Tahiti sequences (which also include flashbacks, à la

Soderbergh's *The Limey*, that are clipped from an uncompleted '60s film in which Subor acted). Elements of sacrifice, willful isolation, trespass and deception mix with Louis' apparent dreams of killing an intruder or the girl who takes over his cabin after he leaves. Apart from Sidney, are any of these people real? Or are they quasi-metaphorical re-imaginings of people Louis has met before?

It's hard to get a sense of Louis, but then Denis' film is as much about a fading man's drifting visions as it is the strange amends he's trying to make. Whether you're confounded, strangely charmed, or irritated by it, you're unlikely to forget it—*L'Intrus* is like a rapturous, cryptic poem composed by a sleepwalker. This is cinema as a sensory experience. ♥

Breslin a ray of *Sunshine* in a talented cast

TYSON KABAN / tyson@vnewweekly.com

I don't think dysfunctional is the right word to describe the Hoovers, the family at the center of the nifty road-trip romp *Little Miss Sunshine*. Unconventional? Sure. Peculiar? Maybe.

But for all their idiosyncrasies and quirks—the dad's a failing motivational speaker, the grandpa snorts heroin, the uncle is gay—they seem to function just fine. That is, until seven-year-old daughter Olive (Abigail Breslin) qualifies for the Little Miss Sunshine children's beauty pageant and all of these mismatched caricatures are tossed into a yellow VW bus headed from New Mexico to California.

Instead of making the statement that all families are so dysfunctional it's normal, *Little Miss Sunshine* seems to take the individualistic route; each character has their own problems and personal struggles, which are expertly revealed by husband-and-wife director Michael Arndt and Valerie Faux over the course of the road trip.

Dad Richard's (Greg Kinnear) nine-step program for success isn't bringing him much success at all. No one comes to see him speak. No one wants to give him a book deal. As a result, it's straining his marriage to mom Sheryl (Toni Collette), who



clearly resents being the family's sole financial provider.

Grandpa (Alan Arkin) is a dirty, dirty old man who has yet to break his heroin habit, even snorting it in the motel bathroom while Olive sleeps in the other room. Sheryl's brother Frank (Steve Carell), a homosexual Proust scholar, just tried to kill himself. The reason why? A hunky grad student who left Frank for another Proust scholar, who just so happens to enter a convenience store at the exact moment Frank is buying porn. As for Sheryl's son Dwayne (Paul Dano), he's taken a vow of silence in devotion to Nietzsche, only communicating through pen and paper until he is allowed to go to flight school.

EACH OF THESE ISSUES come to a resolution, and although they may seem somewhat heavy-handed and way too convenient (for instance, the reason why Dwayne eventually breaks his silence), *Little Miss Sunshine* is just clever enough to rise above the



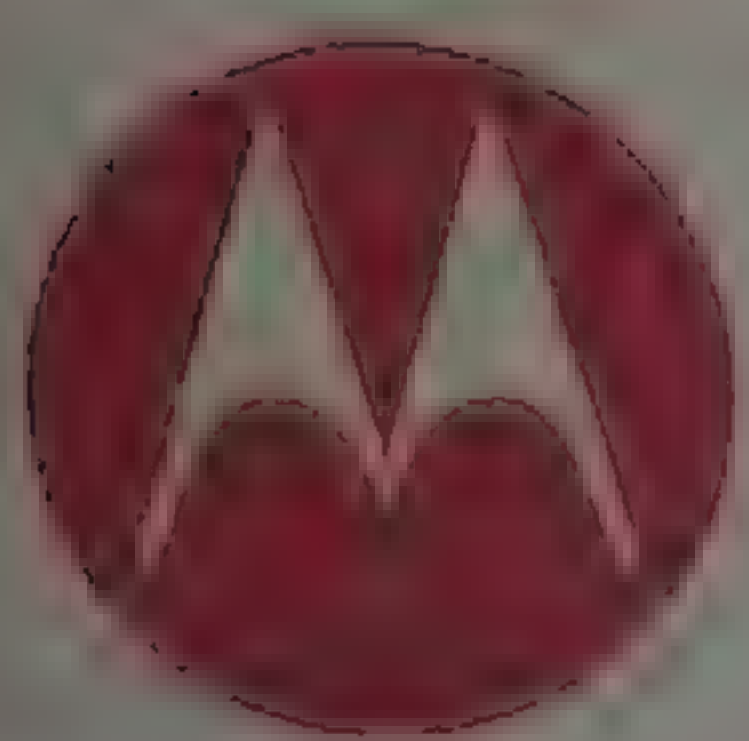
clichés, so much that the beauty pageant, inherently filled with enough satire to be a whole film by itself (see *Drop Dead Gorgeous*), is pretty much a side-note.

Although funny man Carell turns in a great, subdued performance as Frank, turning a character that could easily be another stereotypical flamer into a sad, thoughtful person, it's Breslin who is the heart of the film. As

far as child actors go, Breslin is fantastic. Unlike, say, Dakota Fanning, who is a "serious actress," Breslin acts her age. As Olive, she shows genuine hurt when her own father suggests she's too fat for another scoop of ice cream, and consoles her brother Dwayne in what is probably the most adorable, affecting scene I've watched in a long time.

And when she finally takes the

stage at the pageant and performs a superfreaky dance routine, she seems completely oblivious that she's dancing in front of an audience of dropped jaws. Proud and innocent at the same time, Olive isn't old enough to care about other people think. She's just having fun, and even though the rest of the ensemble is stellar, it's Breslin that makes *Little Miss Sunshine* so refreshing. ♥



MOTOPEBL

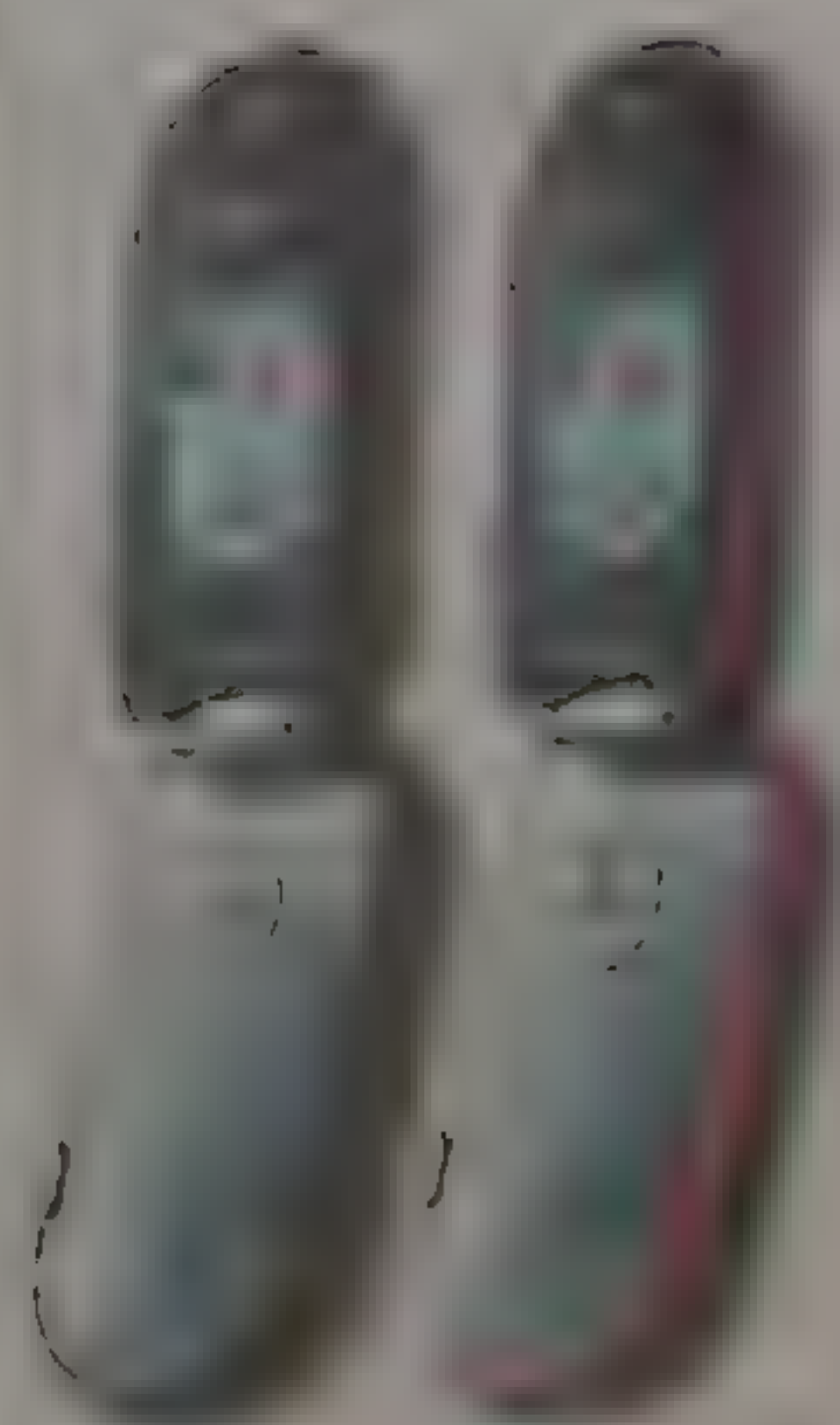
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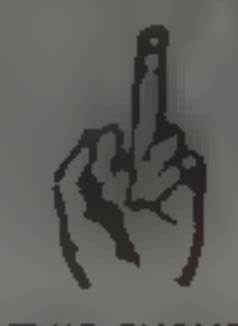
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Pulse barely even scary enough to bore you to death

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vuwweekly.com

In their attempt to re-craft Kiyoshi Kurosawa's 2001 *Pulse* into a more streamlined, coherent, mainstream Hollywood horror film, director Jim Sonzero and writer Wes Craven have succeeded at little more than revealing a rather thin concept for what it is.



THIS SUCKS

Where Kurosawa's *Pulse* sacrificed character, story and structure in the interests of distinctive atmospherics and subtle chills, Sonzero and Craven's *Pulse* seems single-mindedly concerned with figuring out in clear, concise narrative terms what Kurosawa's movie was really all about. Turns out it was really all about atmospherics and subtle chills.

Pulse proposes that phantoms too can surf the net—literally. Pale, wan, and usually bald and naked, these malicious spirits that look like the generic nasties from every other recent horror film are coming for us through modern communications technology, leaving behind inky ectoplasmic stains that look like Rosarch tests. They're supposed to be the spirits of dead people, but sometimes they look like contortionist demons crawling upside-down out of industrial dryers like feeble octopuses. Go figure.

HORROR

NEW PLAYING PULSE

DIRECTED BY JIM SONZERO. WRITTEN BY WES CRAVEN. STARRING KRISTEN BELL, IAN SOMERHALDER, CHRISTINA MILIAN

UNWILLING TO LEAVE well enough alone, efforts are continually made throughout *Pulse* to explain its phenomena, but no single explanation gets past breathless vagaries, whether concerning the relationship between electronic signals and the spirit world or even the basic motivations of the spirits themselves. One character says the ghosts simply want what they no longer have: life. But dragging more people into the ether doesn't seem to make the ghosts any more "alive" than they were before. As transdimensional drama, *Pulse* is drearily static.

Now, obviously, a horror film needn't be rational to function—some of the best never even stop to tell us what the hell is going on, but simply eke out the hidden terror lurking in the shadows of ordinary life. There's a lesson in this.

Pulse almost seems onto something in this regard in its first scenes, with Craven characteristically punctuating concept at every turn, emphasizing on an intimate scale the ubiquity of cell phones, PDAs and computers in mod-



ern life. It's a shame that this build-up of technological dependency never goes anywhere. How can it when the ghosts don't actually abide by technology's rules—they get you even if you unplug and deactivate everything, so what does it matter? As is often the

case, when there's no internal logic, however basic, there's no suspense.

In complete opposition to its predecessor, *Pulse* shows us way too much too soon and this too flattens out the film's energy by trading in mystery for bland special effects. The apocalyptic

finale is no more impressive, relying on the über-cliché image of empty streets with lots of newspapers blowing across them to convey world scale crisis. If anything, it's the image of the world coming to an end in sheer boredom. ▽

Step into the world of Hudson Hawk

MOVIES **HERESY!**
DARREN ZENKO

In Heresy!, *Vue Weekly* invites its film reviewers to either champion a film that everyone else thinks is trash, or to trash a film that everyone regards as art.



THE CENTERPIECES of *Hudson Hawk*, the parts everyone remembers, are the heist sequences where Bruce Willis and Danny Aiello burgle joints while timing their actions to the meter of pop standards. Like pretty much everything else in the movie, it makes no sense; why don't they just use watches? Why? Because then they wouldn't be singing! As clockwork as their thievery action might still be, they'd just be robbing a place in a silence broken only by gritty one-liners rather than daintily soft-shoeing and show-tuning their way through a museum while "Swinging on a Star" builds from whisper to big finale.

Hudson Hawk has more in common with a slapstick gag anthology like *Airplane!* than with the action-adventure genre it seems to occupy, and it has to be appreciated as such: there is hardly a single line in the movie that isn't a gag, quip, pun or put-down. It's total comic anarchy, ironically—perversely, even—stretched

across an orderly, mechanical caper framework, and when your mind gets into that zone (go ahead and help it along) the movie opens up its treasures to you.

Some of those treasures are easier to perceive than others, sitting right against the bulletproof window in the vault door: Richard E. Grant and Sandra Bernhard as Darwin and Minerva Mayflower, a fantastically psychotic parody of evil-for-evil's-sake supervillains. Hilariously over-the-top, yes ... and also icky and disturbing. Too disturbing? Maybe for a kids' movie, but there's another secret of *Hudson Hawk*: it's not a kids' movie. It's not a family movie. It's a comedy, yeah—a slapstick comedy—but it's a comedy for adults, a comedy that gets darker than we're used to. The world of *Hudson Hawk*, as cracked as it might be, is still a world like our own where the whimsy of a musical number and the horror of a slit throat co-exist. ▽

He's a magic man.

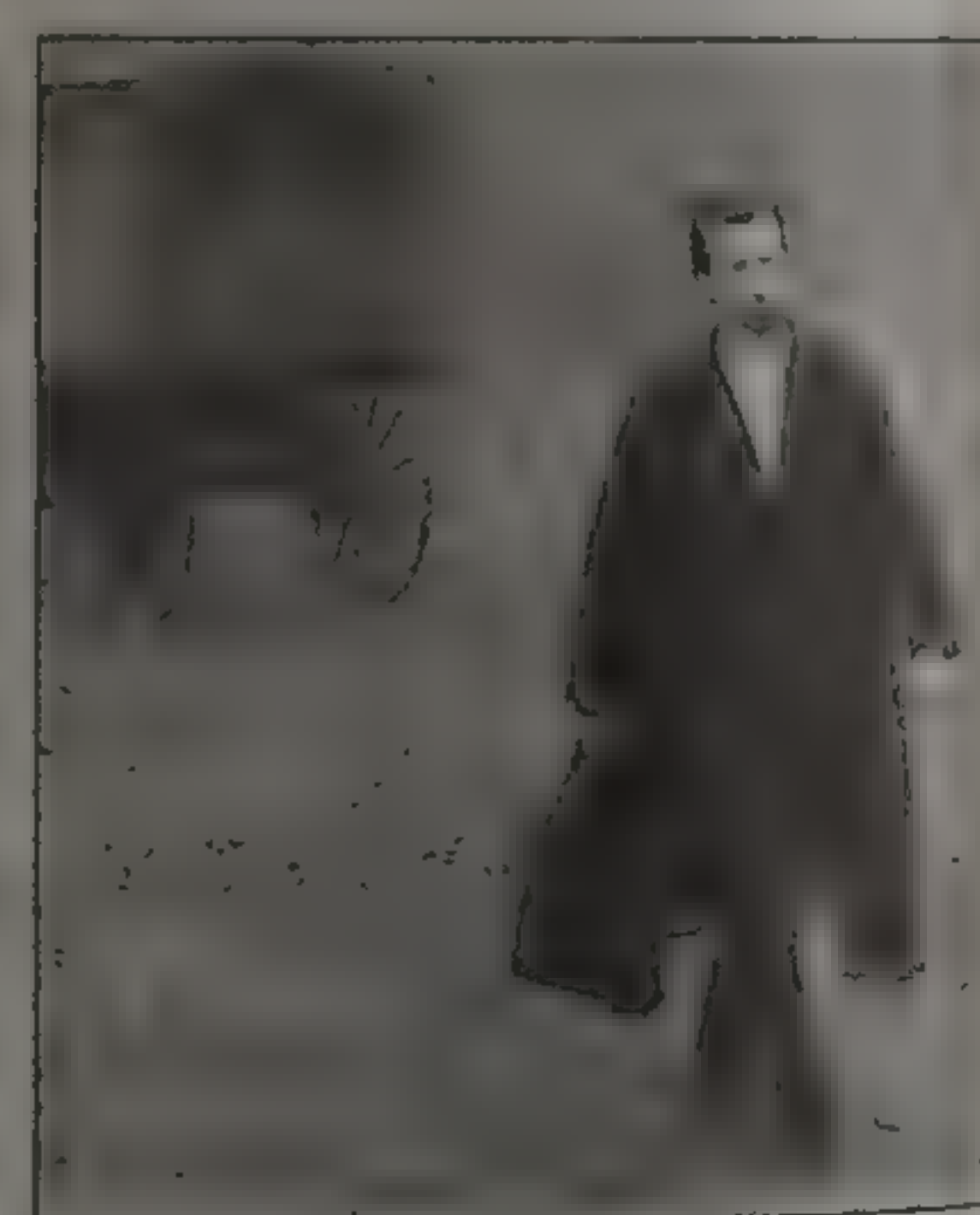
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Leopold looking on, Eisenheim's downfall all but guaranteed.

THIS IS A familiar love triangle, where each point represents a different kind of archetypal power. It's old-fashioned but it basically works, partially because the actors—especially the coolly focused Norton—balance enigma with emotional intensity, partially because Glass's steady-building, oceanic score is ideal for invoking the mystical, and partially because the setting Burger nurtures is infused, albeit vaguely, with implications about class, politics and, though never mentioned, maybe even racism.

Norton certainly looks decidedly Jewish here—as a number of magicians of the time were—and his character exists in a world where anti-Semitism was hardly tempered by the new enlightenment.

Modelled somewhat after Ingmar Bergman's *The Magician* (1958), *The Illusionist* is driven by a political and ideological conflict between artists and the state, between the appeal of good performance and the oppression of young science. The corrupt but good-hearted Chief Inspector Uhl (Giamatti) stands at the story's centre, trying to glean truths from both his imperial employers and the tight-lipped, love-struck magician he's



charged to persecute.

Playing detective on the audience's behalf, Uhl's the only character to really develop in *The Illusionist*, but Giamatti assumes the difficult role with singular panache, investing it with complexity and making something of even the trickiest scenes like the final moments where Uhl suddenly figures out a possible explanation to the film's most inexplicable events, a scene that basically requires Giamatti to make a dizzying variety of excited faces while saying nothing.

It's probably thanks in large part to Giamatti that, even when *The Illusionist* attempts to throw an ambiguous last-minute twist at us, changing the nature of all that came before, we can still walk away in a state of wonder, instead of just feeling cheated. ▽

**PREPARE TO DISCOVER THE EXTRAORDINARY
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ELLE, Karen Durbin

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Edward Norton casts an intoxicating spell
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AND SEXY - AS IT IS SUSPENSEFUL.
Jessica Biel brings such
grace and intelligence."

USA TODAY, Claudia Puig

"STUNNING! POWERFUL!"

Paul Giamatti is SUPERB!"

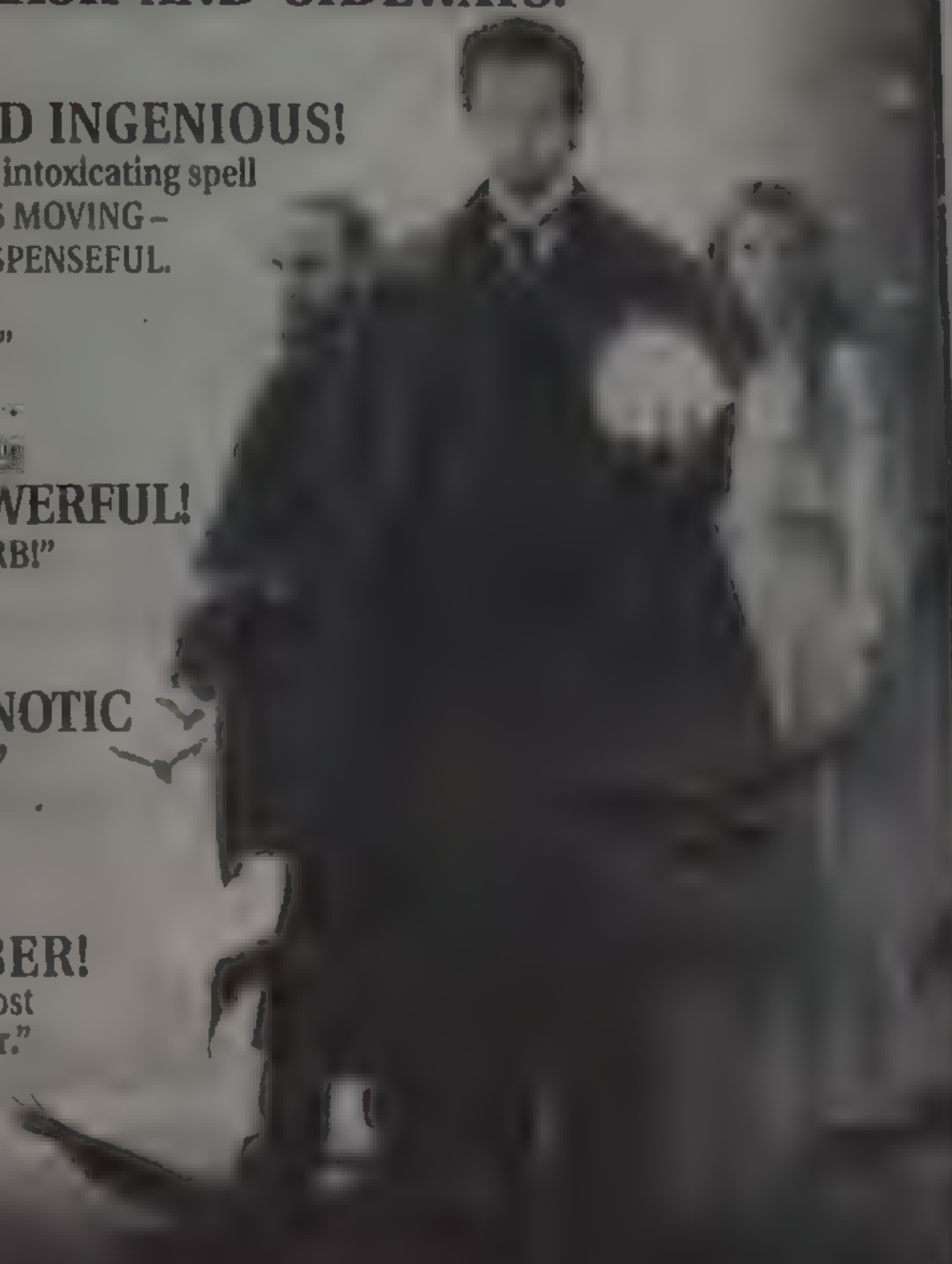
TODAY, Gene Shalit

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THE ILLUSIONIST

NOTHING IS WHAT IT SEEMS.

Edward Norton's THE ILLUSIONIST is a romantic thriller that is as moving and sexy as it is suspenseful. Jessica Biel brings such grace and intelligence to the role of Anna, the woman who falls for the illusionist. The film is a masterpiece of suspense and romance, and it is sure to be one of the most honored films of the year.

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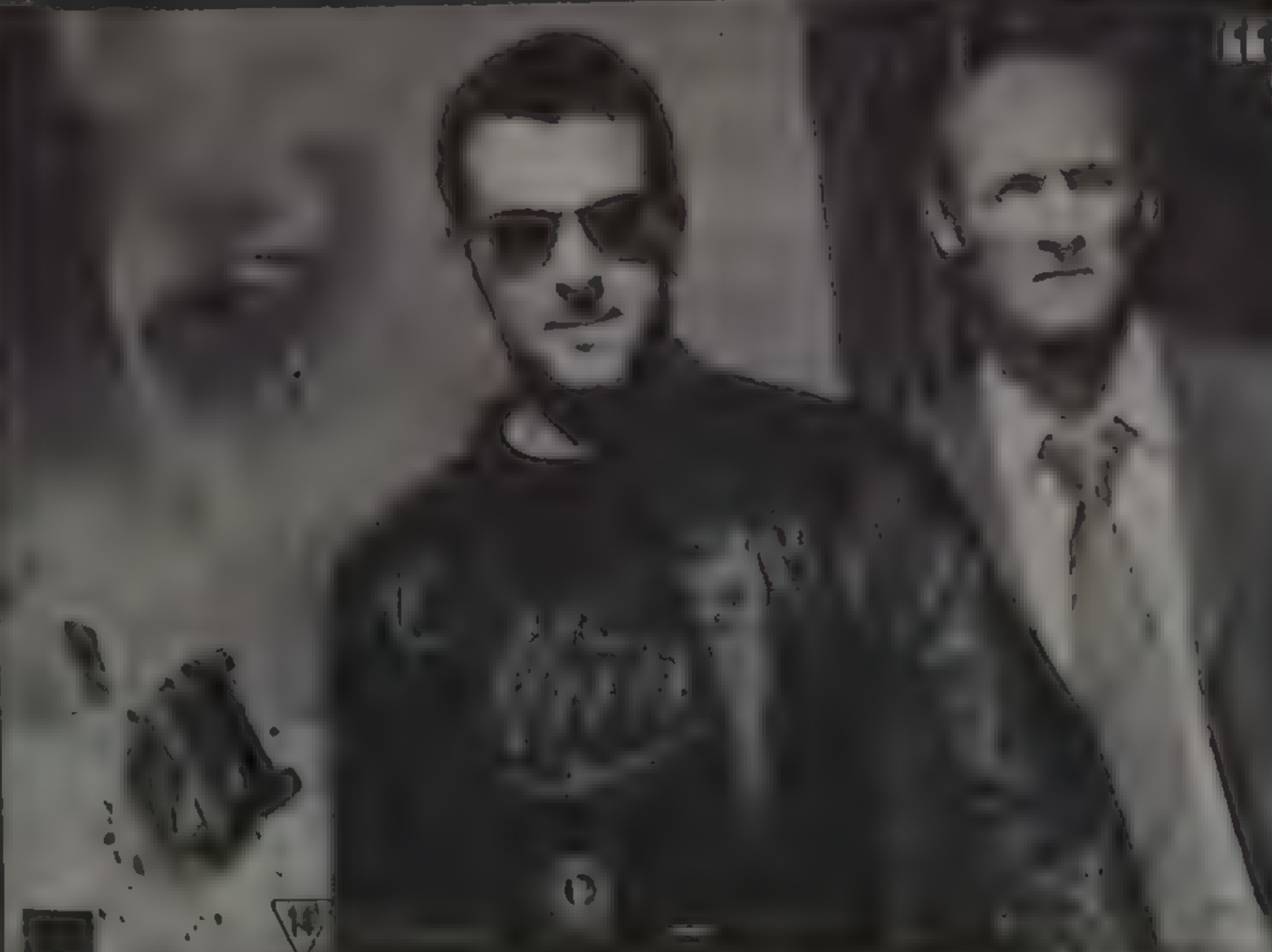
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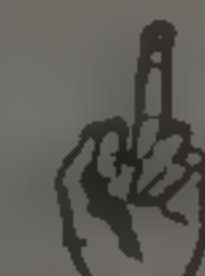
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SAT & SUN MATINEE 2:00 PM
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VISIT US ON LINE @ MAGICLANTERNTHEATRES.CA

Where are the nuanced, character-driven superhero stories?

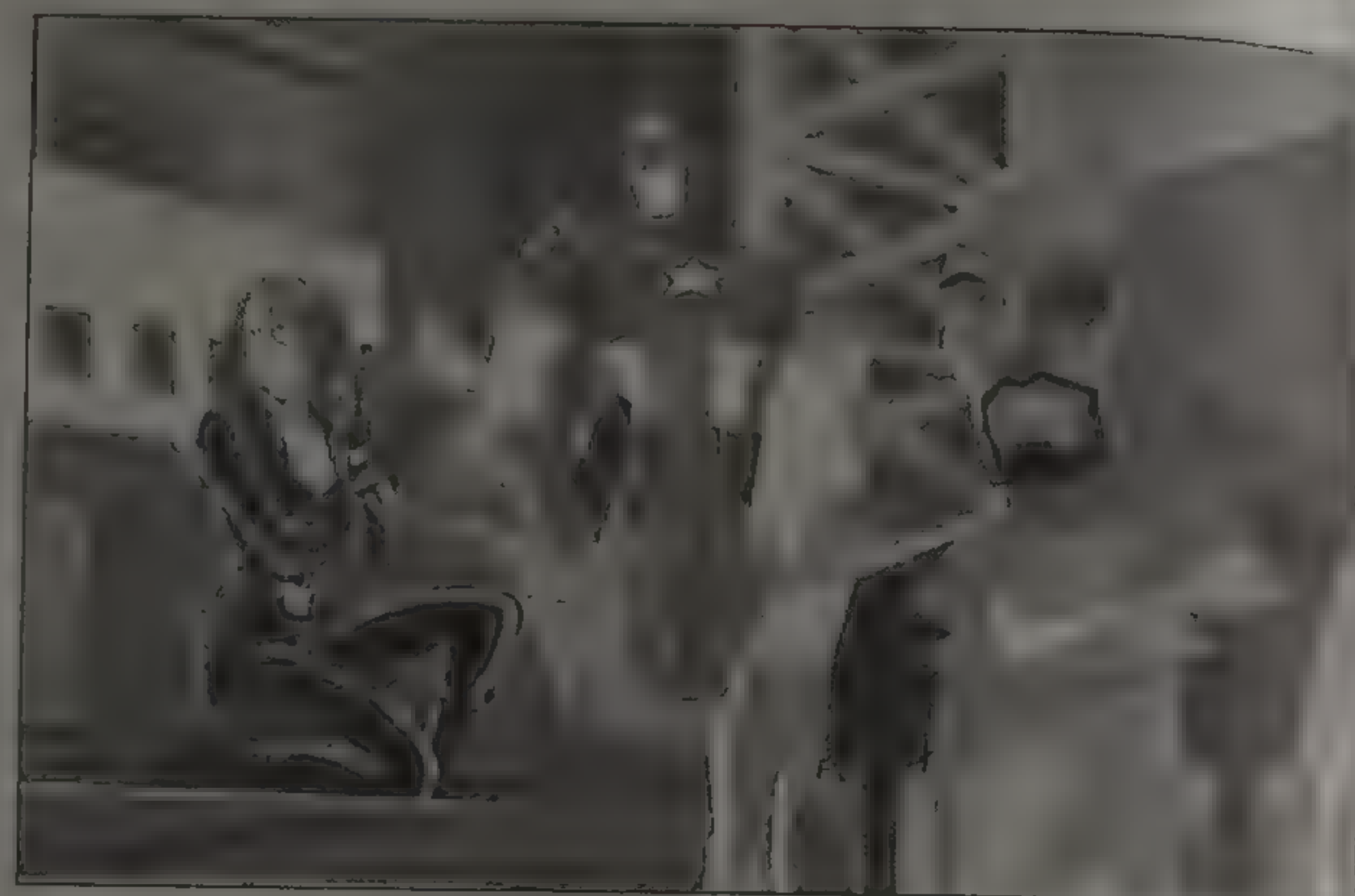
DARREN ZENKO / darren@vuweekly.com

They are Earth's—well, Marvel Comics'—mightiest heroes! An ancient Norse thunder god whose mighty strength and mystic hammer smash the unrighteous; a living legend from a time of heroism reborn to carry on the fight for freedom; a genius technologist whose mechanical might strikes technological terror into the hearts of spies and saboteurs



and a high-society fashion plate who turns into a fairy and shoots mildly annoying electrical bolts; her schizoid inventor husband who will have at least a half-dozen grow-and-shrink based alter-egos over the course of his depressing train wreck of a superhero career; a rage-driven semi-moron who happens to be the most physically powerful being in the universe; the kung-fu king of an isolationist African techno-tribe; a super-fast, super-sultry mutant and his witty wig-wearing sister; an android; a deaf guy with a bow-and-arrow set ... and we haven't even left the '60s yet.

It's been a long, weird 43 years of reinvention and recombination for the Avengers that've led us to this month's release of the second of the *Ultimate Avengers* direct-to-DVD animated films.



DVD NOW AVAILABLE
ULTIMATE AVENGERS I & II
DIRECTED BY CURT GEDA AND STEVEN E. GORDON
WRITTEN BY GREG JOHNSON
STARRING JUSTIN GROSS, MARC WORDEN, MICHAEL MASSEE, GREY DELISLE

Based on the Ultimate series launched in 2001—a continuity that tells a darker, harder, more tangible Avengeroid myth free (for better or worse) from the legacy of decades of cloning, time-travel, alternate Earths and parallel dimensions that shaped the main Marvel Comics line—*Ultimate Avengers I & II* straddle the line between adult action-adventure and Saturday-morning kiddie cartoons, and that straddling isn't always comfortable.

With the comics' adult themes toned down or sloppily adapted from Mark Millar's work on the page, and with art direction owing more to GI Joe than Brian Hitch's mini-masterpieces, there's not enough maturity to power a movie for grown-ups—there's still too much of the same "cartoons are for kids" spirit that had the homicidal Punisher shooting stun darts and net guns in the '90s Spider-Man series—but as the PG-13 rating attests, there's enough bloodletting and backtalk to keep it off the floor-level shelves.

THIS INCARNATION of the Avengers has Iron Man, Giant-Man, the Wasp, Thor and a recently thawed-out Captain America brought together by S.H.I.E.L.D. (Special Headquarters, International Espionage, Law-Enforcement Division) director Nick Fury and his first officer, the deadly

Russian superspy known as the Black Widow, in order to stop the reptilian alien Chitauri and their shapeshifting Nazi leader from taking over the Earth—as well as to act as superpowered backup in case S.H.I.E.L.D. Super-Soldier researcher, Dr. Bruce Banner, goes off his meds and becomes the rampaging Hulk again (two guesses as to whether this happens). They're not shiny, happy heroes—Iron Man's a flippant buffoon, Captain America's a bitter murder piece, Giant-Man's an emotionally abusive husband, Thor's a hippie and their battles with one another and the system they've bought into power the story as much as the super-fights.

At least, that's the theory. In practice hack dialogue, wooden voices (Olivia d'Abo's "Russian" accent and the Black Widow is consistently scene-ruining) and chicken-out choices (in the comics, Giant-Man beats the Wasp to an inch of her life and gets his 60-foot ass kicked by Captain America; in the film he's just a common asshole) keep our eyes rolling rather than riveted, even amid some pretty spectacular battles and great animation.

As a fanboy, I'll take what I can get after a lifetime of following the Avengers—seeing the classic Thor-Hulk matchup in full motion and colour is just one example of the many moments that put goosebumps on my pasty nerd arms—but *Ultimate Avengers* ends up being disappointing, even embarrassing: more tacky power fantasies for unsophisticated man-boys, where punches to the face outnumber believable conversations by about 500 to one. **V**

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"ELEGANT."
- AARON HILLIS, PREMIERE

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CHADIA THEATRE-JASPER

6094 Connaught Dr. Jasper, 852-4749

YOU, ME & DUPREE (PG sexual content, not recommended for young children) DAILY 1:30, 7:00, 9:15

MIAMI VICE (14A, violence, sexual content) DAILY 1:30, 6:45, 9:15

CINEMA CITY-12/MOVIES-12

Cinema 12:3633-99 St. 463-5481

THANK YOU FOR SMOKING (14A) 11:40 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:20 11:35

NACHO LIBRE (PG Crude Sexual Language, Mature Themes) 11:00 1:30 4:50 7:20 9:40 12:00

THE BREAK UP (PG Coarse Language, Not Recommended for Young Children) 11:25 1:40 4:40 7:20 9:40 11:55

THE LAKE HOUSE (PG) 11:20 1:50 4:25 7:05 9:35 11:50

OMEN (14A) Gory Violence, Frightening Scenes, 11:25 2:05 4:45 7:35 10:05 12:25

GARFIELD: A TALE OF 2 KITTIES (G) 11:45 1:55 4:20 7:00 9:15 11:25

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT (PG Violence, Not Recommended for Children) 11:15 1:45 4:15 7:30 10:00 12:10

OVER THE HEDGE (G) 11:05 1:10 3:10 5:05 7:15 9:25 11:20

INSIDE MAN (14A Coarse Language) 10:55 1:25 4:05 6:55 9:50 12:15

R.V. (PG) 11:35 2:00 4:35 7:10 9:30 11:40

POSEIDON (14A) 7:20 9:40 11:45

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 (14A Violence) 10:50 1:35 4:10 7:10 9:55 12:15

ICE AGE: THE MELTDOWN (PG) 11:10 1:20 4:00

THANK YOU FOR SMOKING (14A) 11:20 1:30 4:20 6:50 9:15 11:30

NACHO LIBRE (PG Crude Sexual Language, Mature Themes) 11:30 1:50 4:45 7:15 9:20 11:45

THE BREAK UP (PG Coarse Language, Not Recommended for Young Children) 11:25 1:40 4:40 7:20 9:40 11:50

THE LAKE HOUSE (PG) 11:15 1:35 4:15 7:05 9:45 12:05

OMEN (14A) Gory Violence, Frightening Scenes 11:30 1:45 4:50 7:25 9:50 12:15

GARFIELD: A TALE OF 2 KITTIES (G) 11:20 1:05 3:00 5:10 7:10 9:10

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OVER THE HEDGE (G) 11:05 1:10 3:05 5:00 6:55

INSIDE MAN (14A) 9:30 11:55

R.V. (PG) 11:10 1:55 4:30 7:10 9:25 11:40

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 (14A Violence) 9:35 12:00

ICE AGE: THE MELTDOWN (PG) 11:35 2:00 4:35

CITY CENTRE

10200-102 Ave. 421-7020

THE ILLUSIONIST (PG) (MATURE THEMES) FRI-THURS 11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00

SNAKES ON A PLANE (18A) FRI-THURS 1:00, 3:40, 7:00, 9:40

TALLADEGA NIGHTS: THE BALLAD OF RICKY BOBBY (PG) (COARSE LANGUAGE, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) FRI-THURS 1:20, 4:00, 6:50, 9:30

BON COP, BAD COP (14A) (VIOLENCE, COARSE LANGUAGE) FRI-THURS 1:30, 4:10, 7:20, 10:30

PULSE (14A) (FRIGHTENING SCENES) FRI-THURS 2:00, 4:40, 6:45, 9:15

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST (PG) (FRIGHTENING SCENES, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) FRI-THURS 12:15, 3:25, 6:30, 9:45

WORLD TRADE CENTER (PG) (NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) FRI-THURS 12:50, 3:35, 6:35, 9:25

ACCEPTED (PG) (COARSE, SEXUAL LANGUAGE, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN) FRI-THURS 1:50, 4:30, 7:30, 10:10

STEP UP (PG) FRI-THURS 1:40, 4:20, 7:15, 10:05

CLAREVIEW

4211-139 Ave. 472-7600

ACCEPTED (PG) (COARSE, SEXUAL LANGUAGE, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN) 12:30, 2:40, 4:50, 7:00, 9:10

BON COP, BAD COP (14A) (VIOLENCE, COARSE LANGUAGE) 1:00, 3:30, 6:40, 9:20

SNAKES ON A PLANE (18A) 1:50, 4:20, 7:30, 10:00

STEP UP (PG) 1:45, 4:30, 7:10, 9:40

TALLADEGA NIGHTS: THE BALLAD OF RICKY BOBBY (PG) (COARSE LANGUAGE, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) 1:30, 4:10, 7:20, 9:50

WORLD TRADE CENTER (PG) (NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) 1:15, 4:00, 6:45, 9:35

PULSE (14A) (FRIGHTENING SCENES) 12:50, 3:00, 5:00, 7:40, 9:55

THE DESCENT (18A) (GORY SCENES) 9:45

ZOOM (PG) 12:20, 2:30, 4:40, 6:50

MIAMI VICE (14A) (VIOLENCE, SEXUAL CONTENT) 9:00

BARNYARD THE ORIGINAL PARTY ANIMALS (G) 12:40, 2:45, 4:45, 6:55

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST (PG) (FRIGHTENING SCENES, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) 12:15, 3:20, 6:30, 9:30

GALAXY CINEMAS - SHERWOOD PARK

2020 Sherwood Drive. 416-0150

SNAKES ON A PLANE (18A) NO PASSES, FRI-SUN 1:35, 4:10, 7:00, 9:40; MON-THURS 4:10, 7:00, 9:40

ACCEPTED (PG) (COARSE, SEXUAL LANGUAGE, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN) NO PASSES, FRI-SUN 1:30,

3:45, 6:45, 9:00; MON-THURS 3:45, 6:45, 9:00

BON COP, BAD COP (14A) (VIOLENCE, COARSE LANGUAGE) P.M., SUB-TITLED FRI-SUN 1:10, 4:05, 7:10, 10:10; MON-THURS 4:05, 7:10, 10:10

STEP UP (PG) FRI-SUN 1:45, 4:20, 7:25, 9:55; MON-THURS 4:20, 7:25, 9:55

ZOOM (PG) FRI-SUN 1:20, 3:35, 6:40; MON-THURS 3:35, 6:40

PULSE (14A) (FRIGHTENING SCENES) FRI-SAT 1:25, 3:30, 7:30, 9:50; SUN 1:25, 3:30, 9:50; MON-THURS 3:30, 7:30, 9:50

WORLD TRADE CENTER (PG) (NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) FRI-SUN 1:10, 4:05, 7:10; MON-THURS 3:55, 6:55, 10:00

TALLADEGA NIGHTS: THE BALLAD OF RICKY BOBBY (PG) (COARSE LANGUAGE, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) FRI-SUN 1:15, 3:50, 7:15, 10:15; MON-THURS 3:50, 7:15, 10:15

BARNYARD THE ORIGINAL PARTY ANIMALS (G) FRI-SUN 1:40, 4:00, 6:30, 8:55; MON-THURS 4:00, 6:30, 8:55

MIAMI VICE (14A) (VIOLENCE, SEXUAL CONTENT) THURS 9:30

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST (PG) (FRIGHTENING SCENES, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) FRI-SUN 1:00, 4:15, 8:00; MON-THURS 4:15, 8:00

WWE: SUMMERSLAM (STC) SUN 6:00

GARNEAU

11111-111 Ave. 852-4749

LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE (14A) Daily 1:00 9:10 Sat-Sun 2:00 no show 7:00 Thu, August 17

GATEWAY 8

11111-111 Ave. 852-4749

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA (PG) (DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL) FRI-MON-THURS 7:00 9:25; SAT-SUN 1:10 3:20 7:00

THE DA VINCI CODE (14A) (VIOLENCE, MATURE THEMES, DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL) FRI-MON-THURS 8:30, SAT-SUN 1:10 3:20 7:00

X-MEN: THE LAST STAND (PG) (VIOLENCE, MAY FRIGHTEN YOUNG CHILDREN) DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL FRI-MON-THURS 6:40 9:15 SAT-SUN 1:00 3:10 6:40 9:15

JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE (PG) (SEXUAL CONTENT) FRI-MON-THURS 8:30, SAT-SUN 1:10 3:20 7:00

MONSTER HOUSE (PG) (FRIGHTENING SCENES, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) DTS DIGITAL FRI-MON-THURS 8:30, SAT-SUN 1:10 3:20 7:00

ANTHONY KAUN HAI (DTS DIGITAL) FRI-SAT-MON 1:10 3:20 7:00

LADY IN THE WATER (PG) (FRIGHTENING SCENES, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) DTS DIGITAL FRI-THURS 9:30

THE ANT BULLY (G) DTS DIGITAL FRI-MON-THURS 8:30, SAT-SUN 1:10 3:20 7:00

MY SUPER EX-GIRLFRIEND (PG) (SEXUAL CONTENT, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN) DTS DIGITAL FRI-MON-THURS 8:30, SAT-SUN 1:10 3:20 7:00

CLICK (14A) DOLBY STEREO DIGITAL FRI-MON-THURS 7:20, 9:40 SAT-SUN 2:00, 4:10, 7:20, 9:40

GRANDIN THEATRE

Grandin Mall, 571 Winston Churchill Ave. St. Albert, 463-5481

BARNYARD THE ORIGINAL PARTY ANIMALS (G) Daily 1:10 3:15 7:10, 9:10

MIAMI VICE (14A, violence, sexual content) Daily 9:50

JOHN TUCKER MUST DIE (PG, sexual content) Daily 12:45 2:35, 4:25 6:15, 8:05, 9:55

ZOOM (PG) 1:15, 3:15 5:15, 7:15 9:15

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST (PG, frightening scenes, not recommended for young children) Daily 12:55, 3:50, 6:45 9:40

TALLADEGA NIGHTS: THE BALLAD OF RICKY BOBBY (PG, coarse language, not recommended for young children) Daily 12:55, 3:50, 6:45 9:40

LELUC CINEMAS

4762-50 St. Leduc. 945-2728

DATE OF ISSUE ONLY

STEP UP (PG) DAILY 12:50, 3:10 7:00, 9:20

BARNYARD THE ORIGINAL PARTY ANIMALS (G) Daily 1:10 3:15 7:10, 9:10

PULSE (STC) Daily 1:00 3:00 7:20, 9:30

TALLADEGA NIGHTS: THE BALLAD OF RICKY BOBBY (PG, coarse language, not recommended for young children) Daily 1:20 3:40 6:50, 9:00

MAGIC LANTERN CINEMA - SPRUCE GROVE

205 Main St. Spruce Grove 972-2392

TALLADEGA NIGHTS: THE BALLAD OF RICKY BOBBY (PG coarse language, not recommended for young children) 12:00

ZOOM (PG) 1:00 3:00 Aug 19, 20, 22 & 24

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9920-101A Ave. Citadel Theatre. 425-9212

SEE THE AD IN THIS WEEK'S ISSUE

NEW WEST MALL 8

8882-170 St. 444-1820

THANK YOU FOR SMOKING (14A) (CRUDE SEXUAL LANGUAGE, MATURE THEMES) FRI-SUN 1:45, 4:30, 7:00, 9:10; MON-THURS 4:30, 7:00, 9:10

NACHO LIBRE (PG) FRI-SUN 2:10, 4:35, 7:20, 9:40; MON-THURS 4:35, 7:20, 9:40

THE BREAK-UP (PG) (COARSE LANGUAGE, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN) FRI-SUN 2:20, 4:40, 7:10, 9:35; MON-THURS 4:40, 7:10, 9:35

THE LAKE HOUSE (PG) FRI-SUN 1:10, 4:05, 7:10; MON-THURS 4:45, 7:30

OVER THE HEDGE (G) 1:10, 3:10, 5:10, 7:10, 9:10; MON-THURS 4:00, 6:30, 9:00

GARFIELD: A TALE OF TWO KITTIES (G) FRI-SUN 1:10, 4:10; MON-THURS 4:10

THE OMEN (14A) 1:10, 3:10, 5:10, 7:10, 9:10

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT (PG) (VIOLENCE, NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN) FRI-SUN 2:00, 4:20, 6:50, 9:20; MON-THURS 4:20, 6:50, 9:20

MISS OH, IMPOSSIBLE III (14A) (VIOLENCE) FRI-THURS 1:10, 3:10, 5:10, 7:10, 9:10

ICE AGE: THE MELTDOWN (PG) FRI-SUN 1:50, 4:10

WWE: SUMMERSLAM (STC) SUN 6:00

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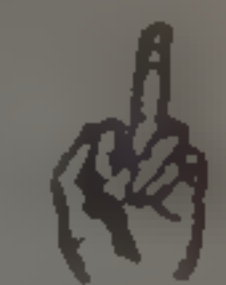
WWE: SUMMERSLAM (STC) SUN 6:00

WWE: SUMMERSLAM</

Stand down, *Step Up*

DAVID BERRY / david@vuweekly.com

We need a new word. I mean, I guess you can call *Step Up* a movie. Under the bare minimum requirements—something shot on film and running in the neighbourhood of two hours—it qualifies. But it lacks all those other things we generally like to associate with movies, like a shred of thought, or emotional relevance, or acting. Does anyone have an idea of what we could call something like this?



THIS SUCKS

Because, really, if you remove it from the context of having to be a movie, it's not actually all that bad. It's still idiotic, of course, but if reduced to an opportunity to watch pretty people dance—fairly impressively, it's worth noting—while eating Reese's pieces, it sneaks by on a kind of stupid charm, anchored to lead Channing Tatum, an

DANCE

NOW PLAYING
STEP UP

DIRECTED BY ANNE FLETCHER

WRITTEN BY DUANE ADLER AND MELISSA

STORY BY MARIO

STARRING CHANNING TATUM, JENNA DEWAN, DEMAINÉ RADCLIFF AND MARIO

uncanny mix of Josh Hartnett and the type of guy whose drink of choice is rum and coke and who only wears muscle shirts to the bar (which is, apparently, catnip for 17-year-old girls, who were saying "I wish he was my boyfriend" through the film like it was a conjunction).

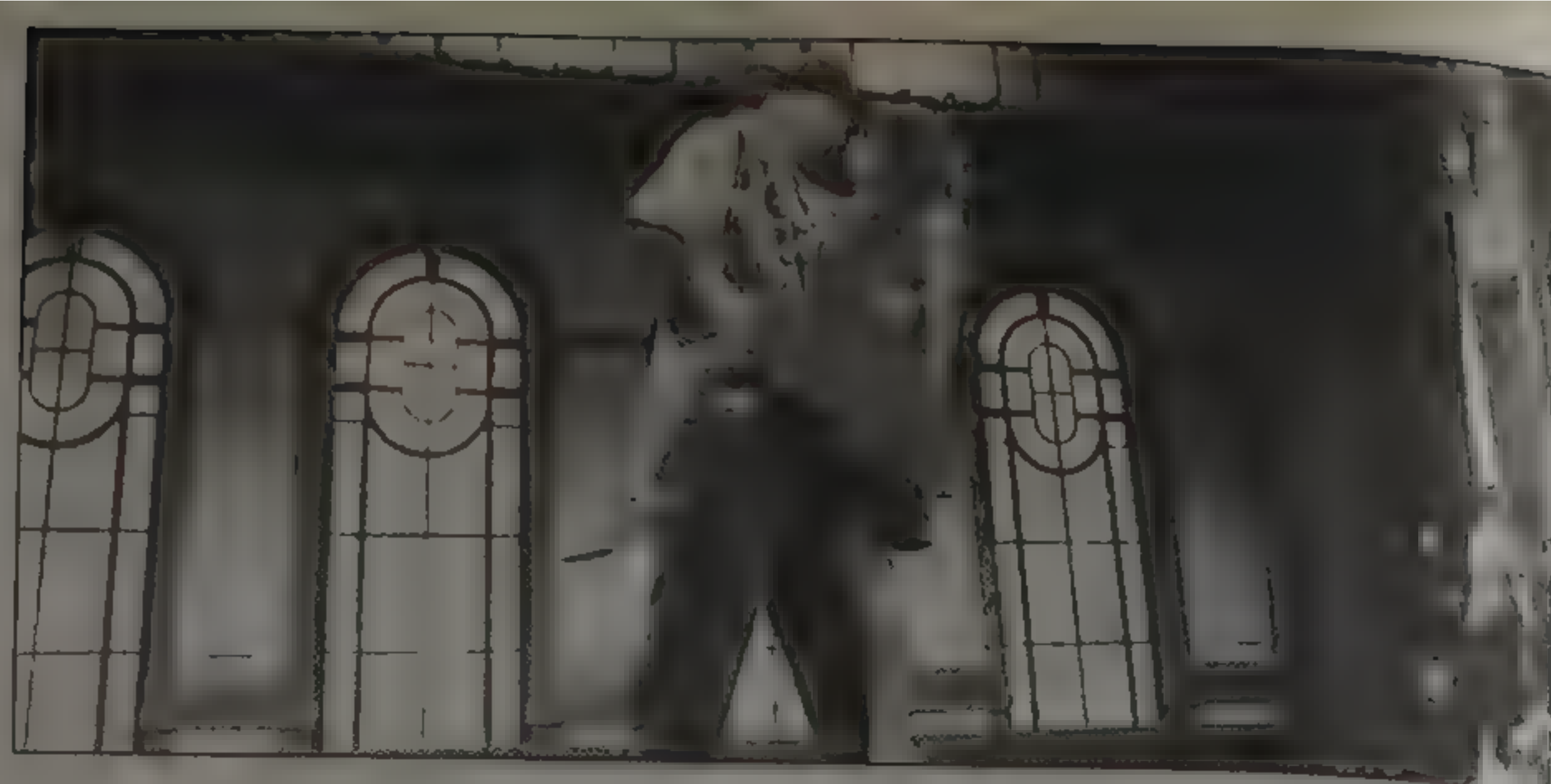
But once, you know, you look for things like connection to character, or originality, you're better off dissecting Volkswagen ads. The essential problem is that the movie is written in fluent cliché, so much so that casting a white actor in the role of disadvantaged urban youth serves as a bold

and unpredictable decision.

Girl shows guy her "private place" where her father used to take her; guy's friends don't understand that his dancing might take him out of the repressive urban hell in which he lives: a plot summary is redundant, because the only way you don't know what happens in this movie is if you've never read, watched or, possibly, listened to anything in your life.

AND REALLY, that might be what makes thing not only bad, but downright insidious. Look, a fair amount of discord in the world comes from the fact that people are unable to accept their own reality, and instead strive for some kind of unrealistic, unattainable fantasy, the type of fantasy perpetuated by the slipping-on-a-banana-peel obviousness of shit like this.

Sorry, Larissa, or whatever the hell teenage girls are named these days,



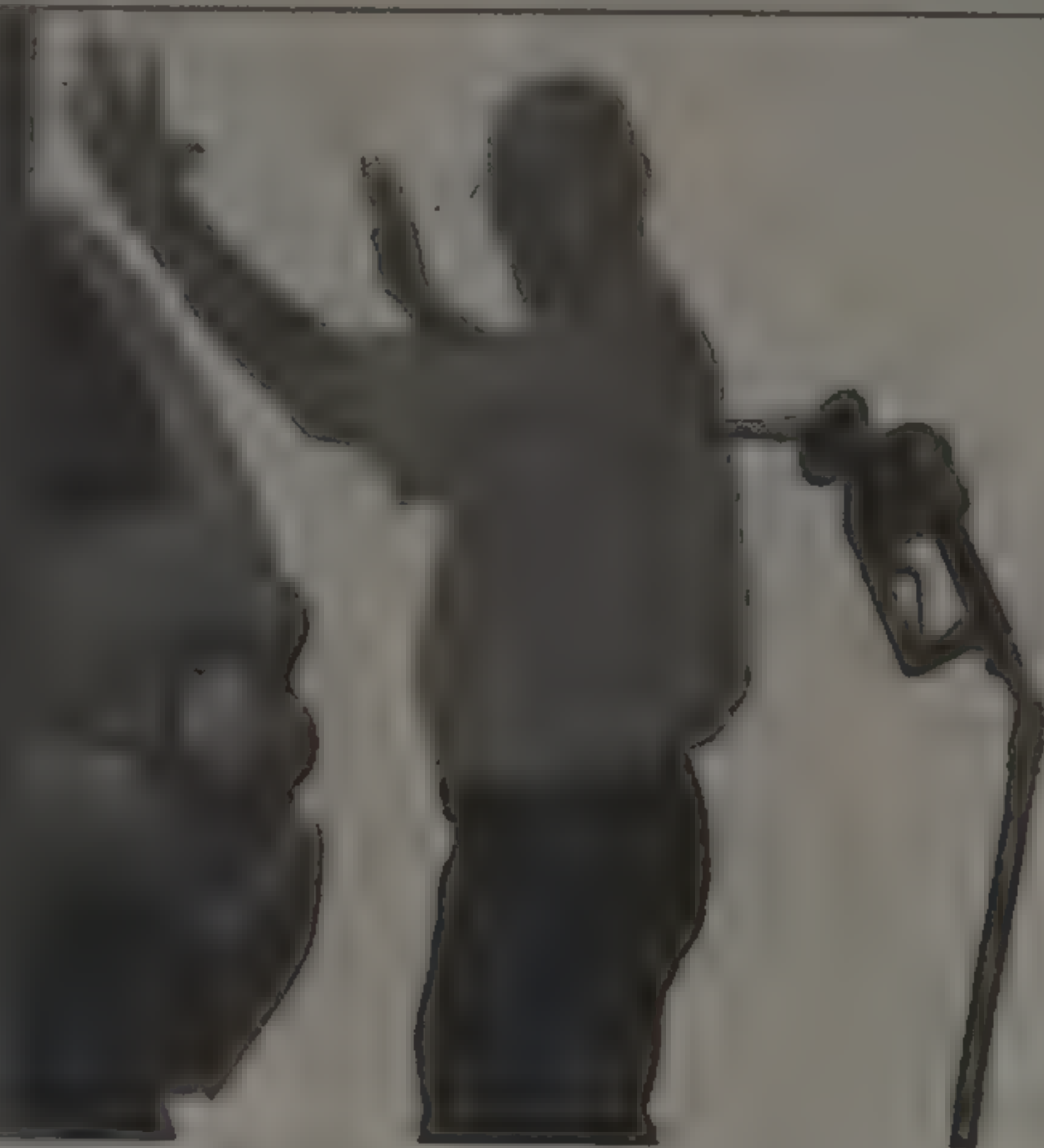
you're not going to get that bad boy to change his ways, or have your boyfriend rush backstage to tell you how much he loves you before popping some mad hybrid of ballet and hip-hop dance to thunderous applause.

Expecting him to be your knight in a shining muscle shirt will only make you ever more dissatisfied with your go-nowhere relationship, and as you bottle up your increasing resentment towards him for it, it will only causti-

cally seep out in increasingly passive-aggressive needling, which will only drive him further away from his shrew of a girlfriend, until you both come to the conclusion that marriage is, paradoxically, the only way to save your tattered, hollow relationship.

The resulting kids will escape the reality of their parents' loveless union by searching out fairy tale romance, and these movies will keep getting made. The word for that is "depressing." ♥

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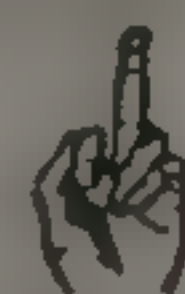
red arrow
motor coach

CALGARY | RED DEER | EDMONTON | FORT McMURRAY

Zoom can't even best Tool Time

STEVE LILLEBUEN / steve@vuweekly.com

Tim Allen deserves a round of applause. As the credits role at the end of his latest film, *Zoom*, he's featured in an outtake where he aptly states, "I think we're funnier on TV. Maybe it's the screen size."



THIS SUCKS

He's right. With appalling performances from former television stars Courtney Cox and Chevy Chase, there isn't much that Allen can do to turn around this flat, uninspired, and boring film. It feels more like a television special than a feature film, with several moments that could fade to black in perfect transition to a commercial break.

Allen plays Zoom, a faster-than-Superman superhero who was a member of a top-secret government project in the 1960s. Back then they used Gamma radiation to increase a person's superpowers. While it did wonders for Zoom, making him faster, it turned his super-powered brother utterly evil, bent on destroying the project and everyone involved in it.

Forty years later, Zoom has been called up from retirement because his long-lost brother has been spotted heading back to Earth to wreak havoc once again. It's Zoom's job to run the training program for the next generation of superhero recruits—a motley crew of under-18s—so they can stop his brother and therefore save the world.

And then nothing happens for the rest of the film.

THERE ARE AT LEAST five extended training montage sequences here that attempt to keep the story chugging along; when they run out of Smash Mouth songs and product placements,

KIDS!

NOW PLAYING
ZOOM

DIRECTED BY PETER HEWITT

WRITTEN BY ADAM RIFKIN AND DAVID

BETHUNALIA

STARRING TIM ALLEN, COURTNEY COX, CHEVY CHASE

the film resorts to cheap laughs

Courtney Cox plays a nerdy, clumsy scientist who slips and falls on her ass repeatedly. There are also plenty of bad jokes involving spitballs, snot, and farts. It's pretty remarkable that no one gets hit in the head with a frying pan, or gets the ol' pie in the face. This movie is as totally cliché and uninspired as a superhero kid film could ever design to be. Someone in Hollywood should be ashamed for giving this film the green light.

Clearly, there is plenty of material here to turn most audiences away. What is a shock, however, is that director Peter Hewitt actually learned a trick or two since his last two efforts, *Garfield: The Movie*, and *Thunderpants* (the movie about the farting boy who becomes an astronaut). Hewitt genuinely tries his best to turn things around here, and while the film still finishes with a failing grade, there are a few unexpected laughs and touching moments that make watching Tim Allen be a father figure—in the tiniest of ways—a little bit amusing, sort of.

Sure, the training sequences drag on, and the commercials for Wendy's get a bit annoying, but at least the formula is tried, tested, and true, and Hewitt, if given at least three more films to practice with, maybe one day be good enough to direct a B-list effort.

It's just really too bad about the frying pan. That would have been funny. ♥



Think I'll
go out to
Alberta ...

PREVIEW WED, AUG 23 (9 PM)
PHIL MURPHY
WITH NEIL MACDONALD
SIDETRACK CAFE, \$5

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vueweekly.com

It seems that this fair city of ours is forever losing members of its musical community to some other, larger musical mecca. What most people don't consider is that the departure of some musician leaves a hole just waiting to be filled. Phil Murphy saw that opportunity and arrived here from Toronto nearly seven years ago with his band, Cervaja.

"At the time, it seemed to be spiking," Murphy explains. "Everyone was moving to Ontario to play music and they were taking all the work. It was getting hard to live out there."

Murphy admits that once he settled into Edmonton it was difficult to keep the band together, and Cervaja split. Fortunately, Murphy met a couple of likeminded musicians in guitarist/producer Stew Kirkwood and drummer Chris Sturwold, who have helped to keep his confidence up as he embarks on a solo career with a brand new album, *Picture Show for Dummies*.

THE DISC, which took a year to record, is made up of songs that Murphy has written throughout the years, and he's happy with the way that it turned out. "They always say that you spending your whole life writing your first album," Murphy says. "I saved the best for this one and we took our time and made sure everything was right."

Part of what Murphy is so pleased about is that he's avoided releasing a set of songs that follow a typical verse-chorus-verse pattern, opting instead for arrangements that are a little more interesting.

"Me personally, I'm getting pretty tired of buying an album that sounds relatively the same all the way through," he admits. "They seem to be following a lot of patterns these days, so I worked very hard to find twelve songs that did not follow a pattern at all with each other. We tried to give each song its own identity. That's the last thing that I want anybody to say about my music, is that it all sounds the same."

Misery Signals take a look in the *Mirror*

LOCAL (WELL, SORT OF) HARDCORE SUPERGROUP COMES HOME FOR YWE

TARA ZUROWSKI / tara@vueweekly.com

Talk about deflecting gut-rending punches. After a tragic car accident claimed the lives of Jordan Wodehouse and Daniel Langlois, two of the members of seminal Edmonton hardcore band *Compromise*, their bandmates merged with Milwaukee-based 7 Angels 7 Plagues. The resulting band, **Misery Signals**, has also just parted ways with their lead singer, fellow Edmontonian and founding member Jesse Zaraska. Yet they still manage to convey a remarkably unyielding energy on stage, a passion that will be on display as they play this year's **Yesterday Was Everything** festival, an annual event meant to commemorate the lives of the late musicians.

The event is understandably important to the members of Misery Signals, making it easy to justify the

PREVIEW

SAT, AUG 19 (2 PM)
YESTERDAY WAS EVERYTHING
WITH DARKEST HOUR, MISERY SIGNALS, DRIVE
BY PUNCH, FROM A SECOND STORY WINDOW, THE
FEBRUARYS, E-TOWN BEATDOWN, SAVANNAH,
SLEEPING GIRL AND OTHERS
POWERPLANT, \$16 (ALL AGES)

time and expense of getting the band's disparately-located members together. Rehearsal, though, is only a little bit harder to coordinate, explains guitarist Stuart Ross.

"Well, I'm from Edmonton, and he's from Regina (Ross points to a member sitting beside him in the van whom I, um, cannot see over the phone), and the band's based out of Madison, which is about a 24 hour drive, so we've gone back and forth to practice," Ross explains. "They've spent some time up in Canada and we've gone there—we were down in

Cleveland for all of May recording our album".

THE BAND HAS BEEN doing the North American shuffle all summer, playing the punk-based Warped tour as well as their own headlining gigs, and are now on their way from east to west promoting the upcoming release of their highly-anticipated new album *Mirrors*, featuring their new vocalist, long-time Signals guitarist Karl Schubach. That Schubach is a guitarist by trade and has never sang in a band before makes the story even more remarkable, especially considering his monstrous voice, a sound the band has been known for in the past. So with all this change, how does *Mirrors* compare with their celebrated debut *Of Malice and the Magnum Heart*?

"I'm really excited about it," Ross

enthuses. "Musically it's a little bit different from our last record—new singer, as well. As far as the song writing, it's a little more thought out. It's not like the material is any more technical, it's just we spent a lot more time arranging the songs so I think the flow is a lot better. We just sort of had a bunch of different topics we wanted to write about and then just came together collaboratively to write them, though Karl did a good amount of it."

"I'm trying to explain the title *Mirrors*," he continues. "I mean, for me, it had a lot to do with change, a lot of the content is about changing yourself for the better; personally thinking you can change."

Fans won't have to wait too long to see if change is, indeed, a good thing: *Mirrors* will be released Aug 22. ♥



REVUE / THU, AUG 10 / MARK BIRTLES PROJECT / SIDETRACK CAFE At my parents' house, there hangs a slightly embarrassing photo of me taken when I was about four years old. In it, I am standing in the backyard of my childhood home and striking what I must have thought was an impressively majestic pose, wearing only underwear and a pair of black boots. I'd always sort of wondered what the hell the four-year-old me thought I was doing, until my mother explained a few years ago that, to the best of her knowledge, I was probably "playing Astro-Boy" at the time. Anyway, I hadn't thought about the damned thing in years—that is, until I showed up at the Mark Birtles Project show at the Track last Thursday and found lead singer Mark Raymond wearing the *exact same outfit*. Well, not exactly—he was also wearing some manner of cape (although I'm pretty sure the 1986 version of me would have incorporated a cape into the ensemble had one been available), as were the rest of MBP, along with various other bizarre wardrobe accoutrements. So why, I'm sure you're asking, did I choose to run this particular photo to accompany this review, depriving *Vue's* readership a glimpse of Raymond's lithe and toned (not to mention surprisingly hirsute) body, in addition to the rest of the whole outlandish spectacle? The same reason Eskimos home games get blacked-out in Edmonton: if you're so damned interested, pay the money and go see for yourself—the Birtles play Thu, Aug 17 at the Studio. Bring your gaunchies. —ROSS MOROZ / ross@vueweekly.com

Storyboard hope to play for Legions of fans

BRYAN CARROLL / bryan@vancouverweekly.com

Edmontonians have a strange relationship with our largest landmark, West Edmonton Mall. It's convenient to have so many goods and services in one place, sure, but it's also a little, you know, annoying, especially when a friend comes to town and they inevitably want to see the thing, forcing you to reluctantly trudge out to our city's pet monstrosity with your tourist in tow. I've been a victim of this sordid ritual many times myself, so I feel the pain of Nano (yeah, just Nano) of the band **Storyboard**, who was stuck at the mall for this very reason as we spoke about his upcoming show.

"I didn't want to come," he said of his location, explaining that a close friend had recently arrived from Toronto. "I have to show her around."

While the mall's noises continued to rage throughout the course of our interview, the topic of conversation moved from the Mall to **Storyboard**—which, I guess, had been the point all along.

"We just got back from tour and we got a new member," Nano informed me. "Well, not a new member—she quit on us and now she's back so it's a reunion of sorts."

THIS LOSS of a member and subsequent reunion, which, as Nano explained, was the result of some romantic fallout within the band, has put the band back on track towards the record deal that seemed well



PREVIEW

FRI, AUG 18 (7 PM)

STORYBOARD

WITH SHINY TOY GUNS, BACKSLASH THE INTERNET, EL TERRAN
ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION (STRATHCONA BRANCH), \$12 (ALL AGES)

within their grasp a year ago but had as of late become almost impossible because, as he explains, "two of us weren't talking to each other." The group is putting all that behind them, however, and are concentrating on making a new record.

"We started off as a shoegazer band—at least, that was the intention," Nano says, explaining the evolution of his band's sound. "The new stuff is techier, but still with flow. It's always been about mood for us."

Storyboard is also looking forward to their upcoming show at the venerable Royal Canadian Legion hall just off of Whyte Avenue. What started off as a small all-ages show a group of friends had planned in order to play for each other has apparently become a bit of a big deal.

"It was originally supposed to be at the Red Strap Market," Nano explains, revealing that the show's promoters moved the venue a number of times to the confusion and frustration of the participants. Some of the promotion had even listed the incorrect venue, he says.

"It's at the Legion," he reiterates. "We're hoping you can mention that it isn't happening at the Starlite."

Done and done. ▽

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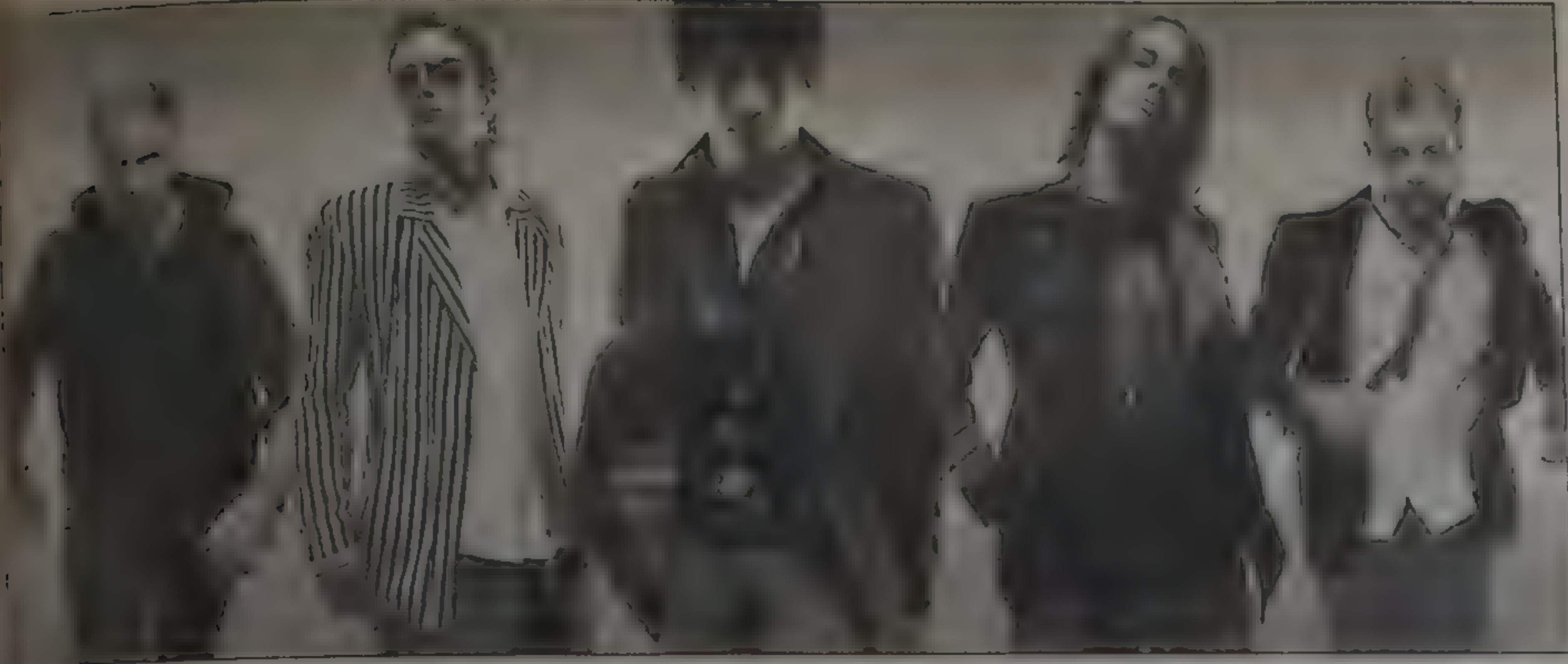
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As it turns out, you can go home

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vancouverweekly.com
The Casanova Playboys released their first album last year, playing some shows around the city in support of the disc. But, with their eyes set on the big time, they pulled up their roots and headed west to Vancouver at the behest of their producer, Jonathon Fluevog (who is, incidentally, the son of shoe guru John Fluevog, if anyone was wondering).

Singer Jamie Star recalls the experience with a heavy recommendation that any kid move to a new city after high school, though he admits that the benefits and lessons of the move were hard earned.

"It was a bunch of guys from Edmonton moving to Vancouver, to a really sketchy area," Star remembers. "It was like being dropped in the middle of nowhere, in this one house among millions of houses with nobody you know around you."

THE MOVE WAS ultimately ill-fated, with the Playboys' bassist and guitarist leaving. The band hooked up with new guitarist Josh Posh out on the coast, but they also suffered from ever dwindling funds.

"We were putting all our money towards this and we just became

PREVIEW THURS. AUG 17 (10 PM)
THE CASANOVA PLAYBOYS
 THE FOX, FREE

completely broke," Star says. "We were starving and it came to the point where the phone company cut us off and we couldn't pay our bills and we were like, 'shit, what are we going to do?' But we were still a band and just because we're in a different city in a fucked up situation, it doesn't mean the band has to stop and quit, so we just packed our bags and went back to Edmonton."

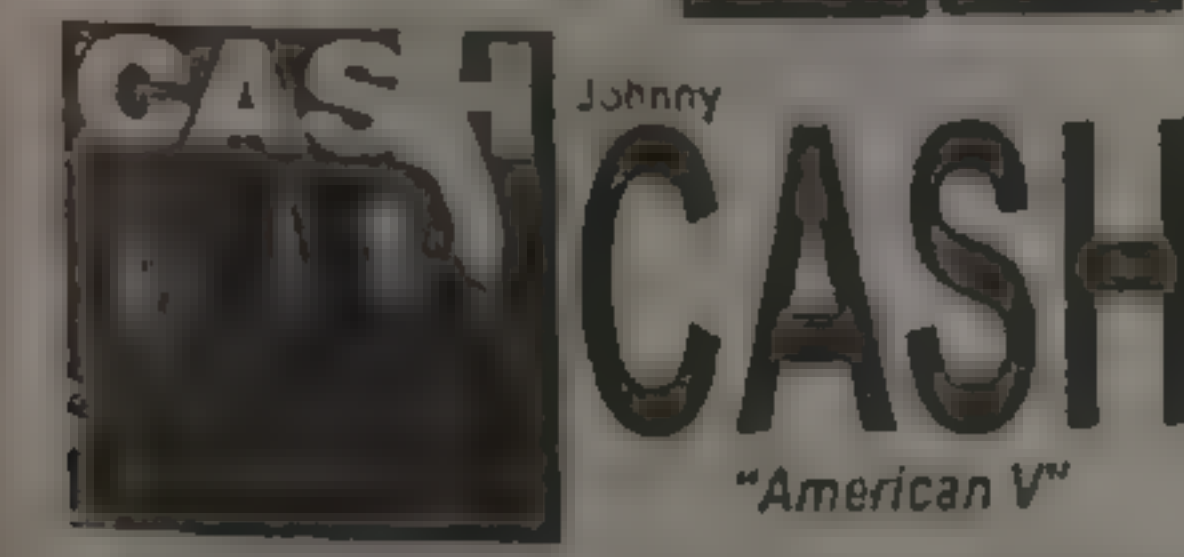
The next six months were a flurry of activity for the band as they saved money and traveled back and forth

between Edmonton and Vancouver to complete their new album, *Low Noise*. "I'd stay there with Jonathon and it was 12 hour days recording vocals," Star recalls. "I'd come back to Edmonton for three weeks and hang out with my girlfriend and then I'd go back to Vancouver."

Star acknowledges that it was a difficult time, but says that it was all worth it in the end. "It was that learning process itself that got me to that point where I know who I am now in my life," he explains. "I am a musician. I've got to do the music. There's no other way of looking at it. I can't settle for anything else but being a musician, a songwriter. I just like creating songs." ▽

FREECLOUD RECORDS

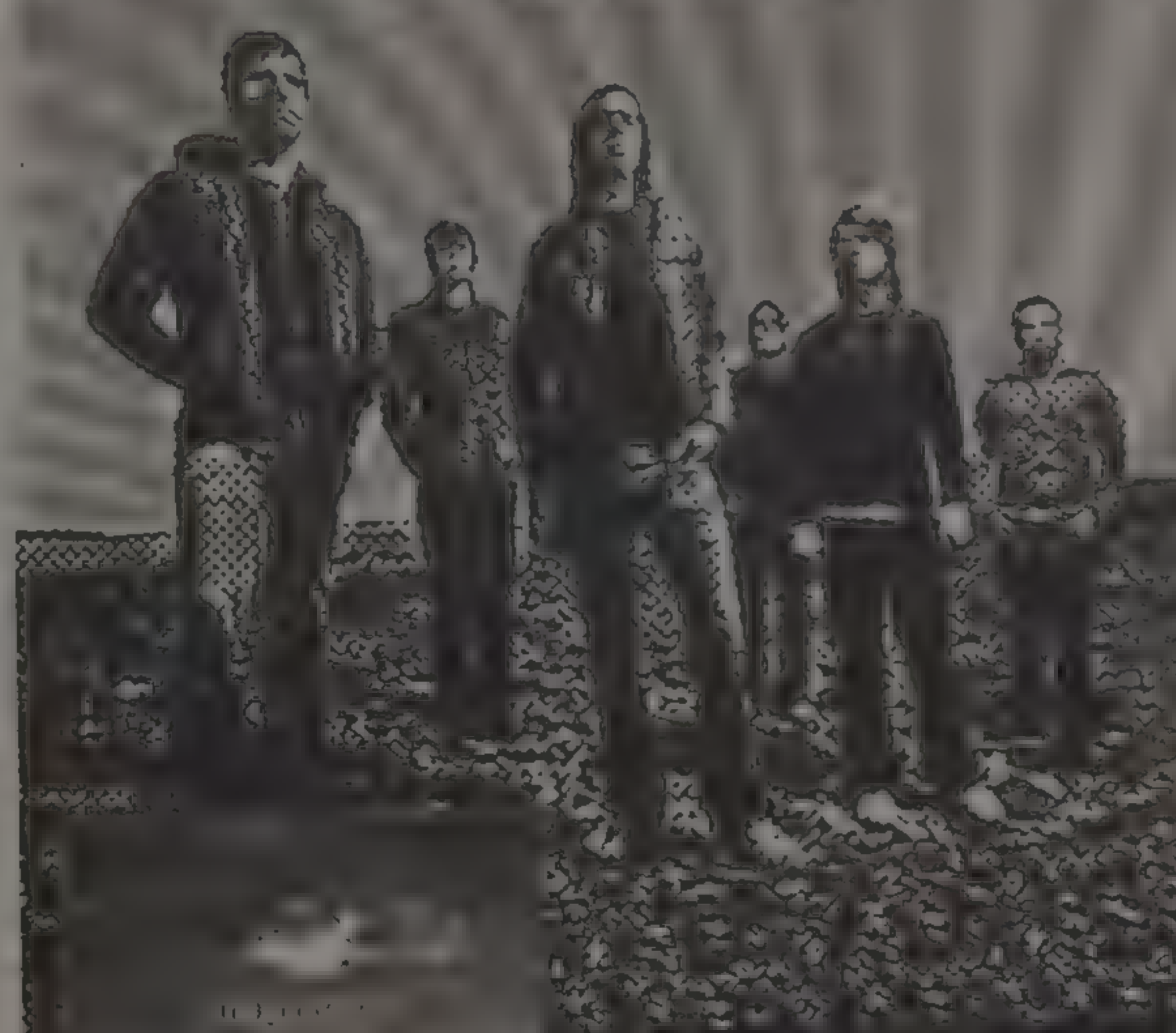
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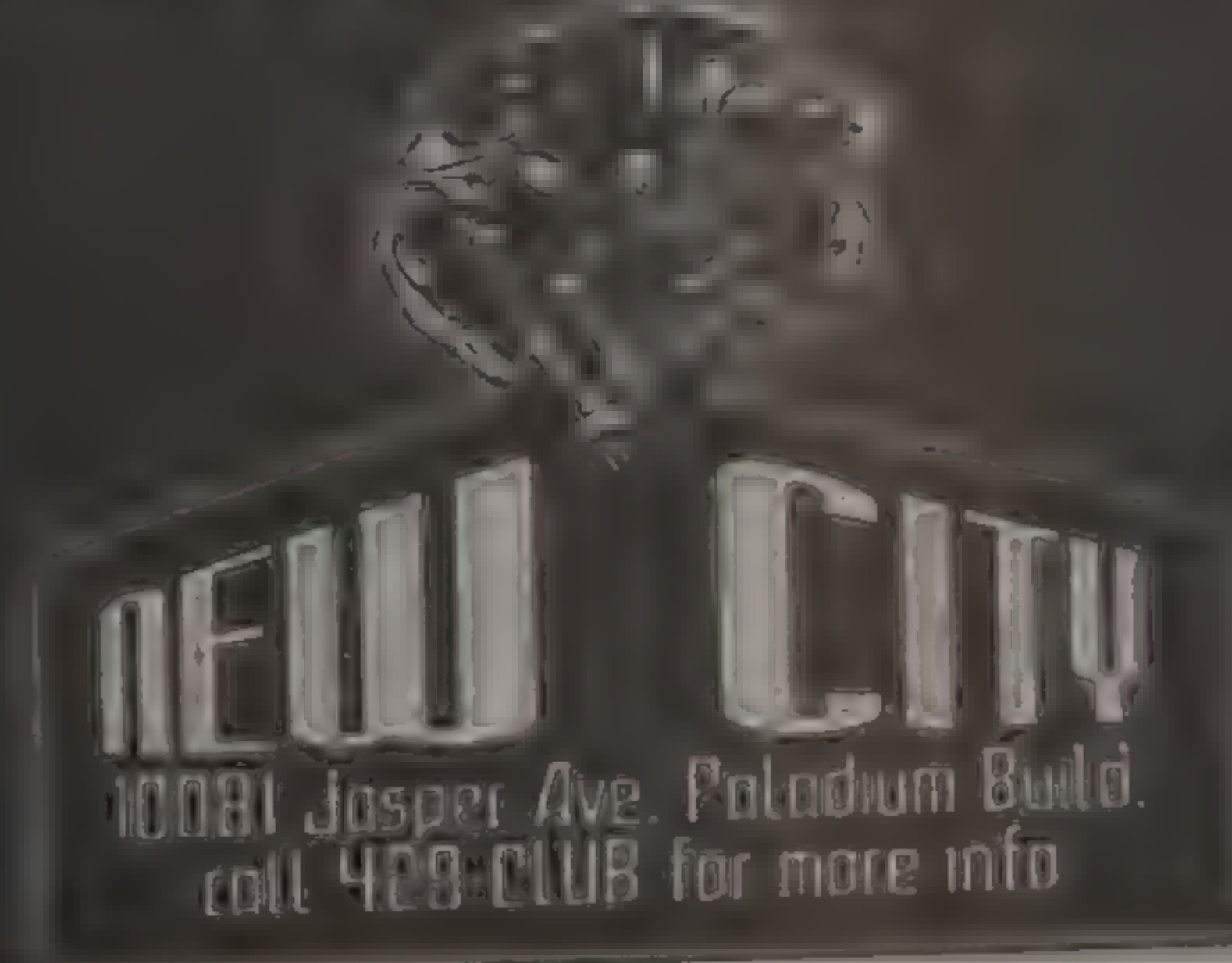
DOORS @ 8:30pm
 NO COVER B4 9pm
 BINGO STARTS @ 9:40pm
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 (creatures feature: 1st floor, 2nd floor, 3rd floor)

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THU
LIVE MUSIC

BACKDRAUGHT PUB Open stage

CHRISTOPHER'S PARTY PUB Open stage hosted by Alberta Crude 6-10pm

DUSTER'S PUB Jam hosted by Brian Patch

DEPRESSION CAFE Open stage

FOUR ROOMS Open stage

JAMMERS PUB Open stage

J AND R BAR AND GRILL Open stage with The Poster Boys (pop/rock/blues) 8:30pm-12:30am

NORTH GLENORA HALL Jam hosted by the Wild Rose Old Time Fiddlers Society 7-10pm

O'BYRNE'S Open stage

SIDETRACK CAFE Open stage

URBAN LOUNGE Open stage

WILD WEST SALOON Open stage

DJS

BILLY BOB'S LOUNGE Escapade Entertainment

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE DJs spin on two levels

BUDDY'S DJ Squiggles, Yohko Oh-no

ESMERALDA'S Big and Rich Thursday top 40, country

FILTHY McNASTY'S Punk Rock Bingo with DJ S.W.A.G.

FUNKY BUDDHA (WHYTE AVE) Requests with DJ Damian

GAS PUMP Ladies Nite: Top 40/dance with DJ Christian

GINGUR SKY Urban Substance Thursdays: Urban Substance Sound Crew, InVincible, ShortRound, Echo, SpinCycle, BabyGirl and Touch It

HULBERT'S Relaxing down-tempo music with DJ Frederick, 7pm

KAS BAR Open stage

NEW CITY LIKWID LOUNGE Open stage

ON THE ROCKS Open stage

OVERTIME BOILER AND TAP-ROOM SOUTH Open stage

RED STAR Open stage

STANDARD DJ Danny Howells (UK): tickets available at TicketMaster, Treehouse, Underground (WEM), Colourblind

VELVET UNDERGROUND NRIMLS WLCM Electro, techno, no wave, hip-hop with DJ Nik 7 and a rotating cast of guests; no minors, 8pm (door)

WUNDERBAR In and Out: with DJ Paul and Frank

RED STAR Femme Fatale: rock, pop, hip-hop with DJ Kelly

THE ROOST Gorgeous: featuring hostess Dr. Lexxi Tronic, Drag Kings and Queens, burlesque and rotating game shows, bands upstairs monthly

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MUSIC WEEKLY

FRI
LIVE MUSIC

CASINO EDMONTON Stars Tonight (tribute show)

CASINO YELLOWHEAD X-Factor (pop/rock)

EARTH FESTIVAL - ATHABASCA Alicia Tait 10:20pm, Chns Comm'n's 11:20pm, Chnk 10:40pm, Tupelo Honey 11:40pm;

Quietus, Cerebus, 8pm (door), \$8 (door)

WHISTLESTOP Mr. Lucky (blues/roots); 9:30pm-1:30am, no cover

WILD WEST SALOON Kory Wlos

CLASSICAL

CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH Summer Serenade: Ludemus Chamber Orchestra (classical garage band); 7:30pm; admission by donation

DJS

AT THE ONE DJ Choklit Elvic and



PREVUE / FRI, AUG 18 (9 PM) / THE IGNITERS / SIDETRACK CAFE \$10

The band will be gritty, the roots will be hot and the basses will stand up as the band formerly known as Rocketone headline a rockabilly-erific triple bill at the 'Track with The Firebrands and Hurricane Felix & the Southern Twists.

Prism 1am

FOUR ROOMS Andrew Glover Trio, 9pm

JAMMERS PUB Country/rock band, 9-2am

JEFFREYS CAFE Thom Bennett and Mo Lefever (funky jazz), \$7

JULIAN'S PIANO BAR Greg Zawaski

NEW CITY LIKWID LOUNGE D.I.Y. Wednesdays in the Suburbs: 180, Kindred, Ras Ghandi, Steppa (reggae); \$5

ON THE ROCKS The Sessions

RED STRAP ART MARKET Amy Seeley, Easy Life Club, Micah Slavens; 8pm (door), 8:30pm (show); \$5 (door)

DJ Spyder

AZUCAR LATIN NIGHTCLUB Top 40 with Latin band and DJ Papi

BACKROOM VODKA BAR Element: D'n'B/house/breaks with Degree, Phatcat, Neal K, Shortee, Sweetz and more

BAR-B-BAR DJ James; no cover

BAR WILD Bar Wild Fridays

BOOTS Retro Disco: retro dance

BUDDY'S Dance party with DJ Alvaro

CALIENTE'S Funktion Fridays

DANTE'S BISTRO Text Messaging Singles Party: For singles 25-40; completely anonymous, totally addictive

Readymade Flyboy

THE ROOST All Request Dance Party with DJ Jazzy

RUM JUNGLE Peoples DJ Spinning

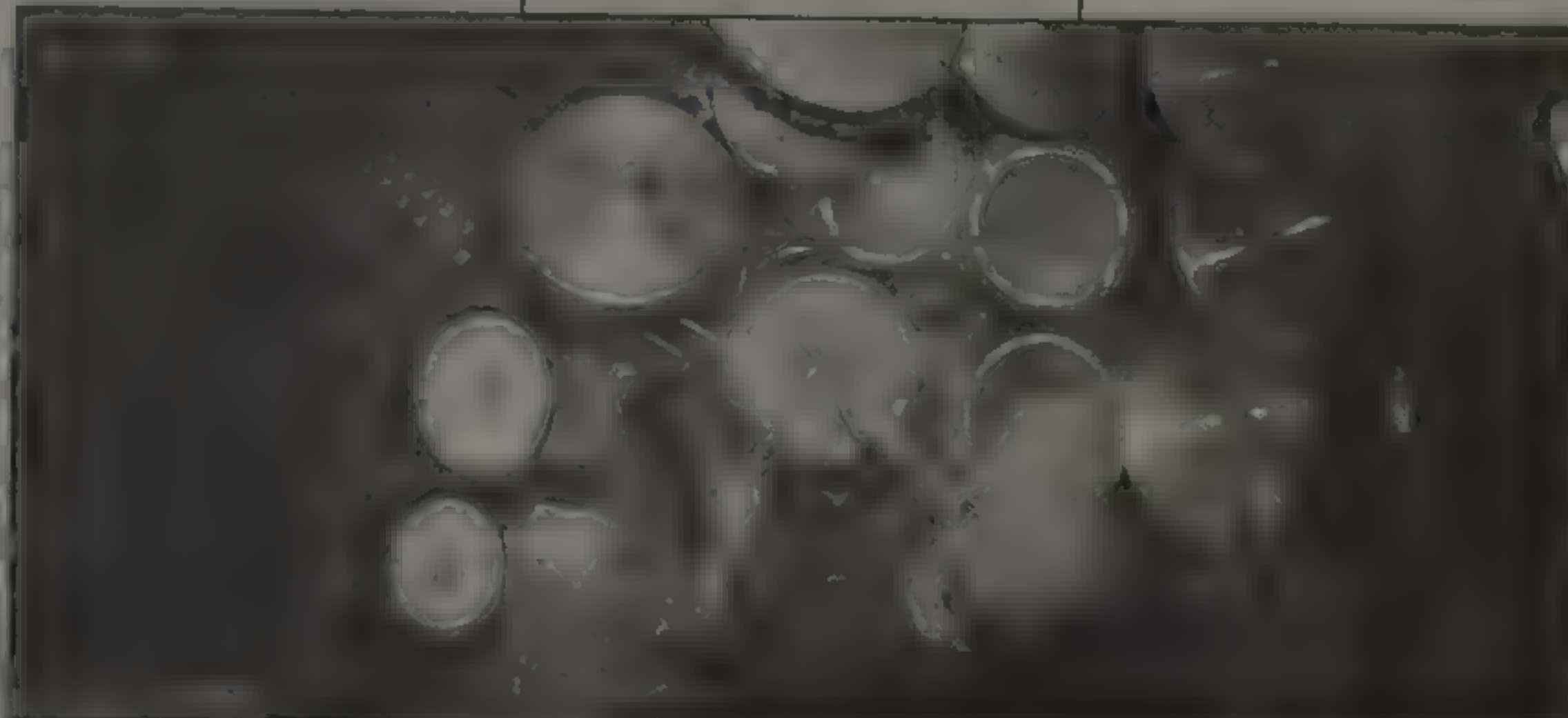
SAPPHIRE RESTAURANT AND LOUNGE Deep House with Friday resident DJ Luke Morrison

STOLLS Top 40, R&B, house with People's DJ

STONEHOUSE PUB Top 40 with DJ Tysin

TWILIGHT AFTERHOURS Flashback: house/hard with Johnny Dangerous, Andy Inertia, guests; 1-7am

WUNDERBAR Featured DJ and Local Bands



PREVUE / FRI, AUG 18 (8 PM) / ANAMNESIS / VELVET UNDERGROUND, \$8 The "insight" section of their website lists Plato, Nietzsche, Descartes and suicide as influences. Their drum rig, evidentially, is a little over the top as well. Come to see what, on Earth a guy needs seven cymbals for; stay for Quietus, Cereberus and Within The Ashes, who apparently didn't get the memo about having a name that ends in "us."

SIDETRACK CAFE The Firebrands, Rocketone!; 9pm, \$10 (door)

STARLITE ROOM Storyboard, Blacklash The Internet, Shiny Toy Guns, El Terran, Vi An, 8pm (door); \$8 (door)

TWILIGHT AFTERHOURS Flashback: house/hard with Johnny Dangerous, Andy Inertia, guests; 1-7am

WUNDERBAR Featured DJ and Local Bands

mous, totally addictive

ESMERALDA'S DJ Jimmy Friday; 8pm (door)

FEVER NIGHTCLUB Friday Nights

FUNKY BUDDHA (WHYTE AVE) Top tracks, rock, retro with DJ Damian

GAS PUMP Top 40/dance with DJ Christian

GINGUR SKY Funktion Fridays

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WUNDERBAR Featured DJ and Local Bands

of the Dog: The Great and the Beautiful; 6pm, no cover

CASINO EDMONTON Stars Tonight (tribute show)

CASINO YELLOWHEAD X-Factor (pop/rock)

DRUID (JASPER AVE) Open stage, all ages; 2-6pm

EARTH FESTIVAL-ATHABASCA Shawndel 10:20pm, Chns Comm'n's 11:20pm, Chnk 10:40pm, Tupelo Honey 11:40pm;

HOMEGROWN SOUL SHACK Sat top rap groups; 5pm

JAMMERS PUB Open stage

RED STAR Loaded Friday: indie rock and Brit pop with DJ

STOLLS Top 40, R&B, house with People's DJ

STONEHOUSE PUB Top 40 with DJ Tysin

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SUN

LIVE MUSIC

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL 7:30pm-11pm

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE 8pm-11pm

BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL 8pm-11pm

CARGO AND JAMES TEA SHOPPE 8pm-11pm

CROWN AND ANCHOR PUB 8pm-11pm

EARTH FESTIVAL-ATHABASCA 8pm-11pm

FOUR ROOMS 8pm-11pm

JAMMERS PUB 8pm-11pm

NEWCASTLE PUB 8pm-11pm

O'BRYNE'S 8pm-11pm

PARS PUB 8pm-11pm

ROSEBOWL 8pm-11pm

SIDETRACK CAFÉ 8pm-11pm

THE ROOST 8pm-11pm

WUNDERBAR 8pm-11pm

MON

LIVE MUSIC

LB'S PUB House band; 9:30pm-1am, no cover

NEW YORK BAGEL CAFÉ Marco Claveria (samba to Bolero) every Monday

PLEASANTVIEW COMMUNITY HALL Acoustic instrumental Old Time Fiddle Jam hosted by the Wild Rose Old Time Fiddlers Society; 7pm

SIDETRACK CAFÉ Maverick Mondays. Open Stage with Ben Spencer, 9pm, no cover

TAPHOUSE Monday Live with

TUE

LIVE MUSIC

BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL Open stage with Mark Ammar

DRUID (JASPER AVENUE) Open stage with Chris Wynters and guest

LEGENDS PUB Open jam hosted by Gary Thomas

SIDETRACK CAFÉ Veilmaker, Makeshift Policy, The Line Atlantic, 9pm, \$5 (door)

DJS

BUDDY'S Malebox, DJ

WED

LIVE MUSIC

ATLANTIC TRAP AND GILL Open mic with Duff Robinson, 8pm

BACK ROOM VODKA BAR Soulful deep house with Nic-E and Smoov

BASELINE FARMERS MARKET-SHERWOOD PARK Amico and Brian Gregg (frosts), 4-8pm

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE 8pm-11pm

COOK COUNTY Wednesday Nite Live, 8pm (door)

THUR

LIVE MUSIC

FESTIVAL PLACE Pato Series Samantha King Trio, Dino Dominelli, 7:30pm, \$5 at Festival Place box office

LEVEL 2 LOUNGE Open Mic

METRO CLUB AND BILLIARDS The Metro World Beat Band with Enigma

NEW CITY LIKWID LOUNGE DIY Wednesdays, 8pm, \$5

O'BRYNE'S Chris Wynters and friends, 9:30pm, no cover

RUSSDALE UNIVERSITY HALL Little Flower open stage hosted by Brian Gregg, 8pm

SIDETRACK CAFÉ Phil Murphy (CD Release Party), Neil MacDonald, 9pm, \$5 (door/\$10 with a CD)

STOLL'S Wild Cherry House/Orange with Tripswitch Resident Funk, fusion with Steve Velocity

WILD WEST SALOON Rydler

DJS

BACKROOM VODKA BAR Deep Wednesdays. Soulful Deep House with Nic-E and Smoov

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Guich with DJ Buster Friendly, no cover

BUDDY'S Midnite with DJ Eddy Toonlash Mia Fellow, Ashley Love, Yohko Oh-no guests

FEVER NIGHTCLUB Wednesdays

LEGENDS PUB Hip hop/R&B with DJ Spinecycle

NEW CITY LIKWID LOUNGE Wig Out Wednesdays. Psycho and rockabilly with DJ Seizures

RED STAR Funk 'n' Soul funk soul, disco, nu jazz, reggae hip hop with Cool Curt, Yuri, Junior

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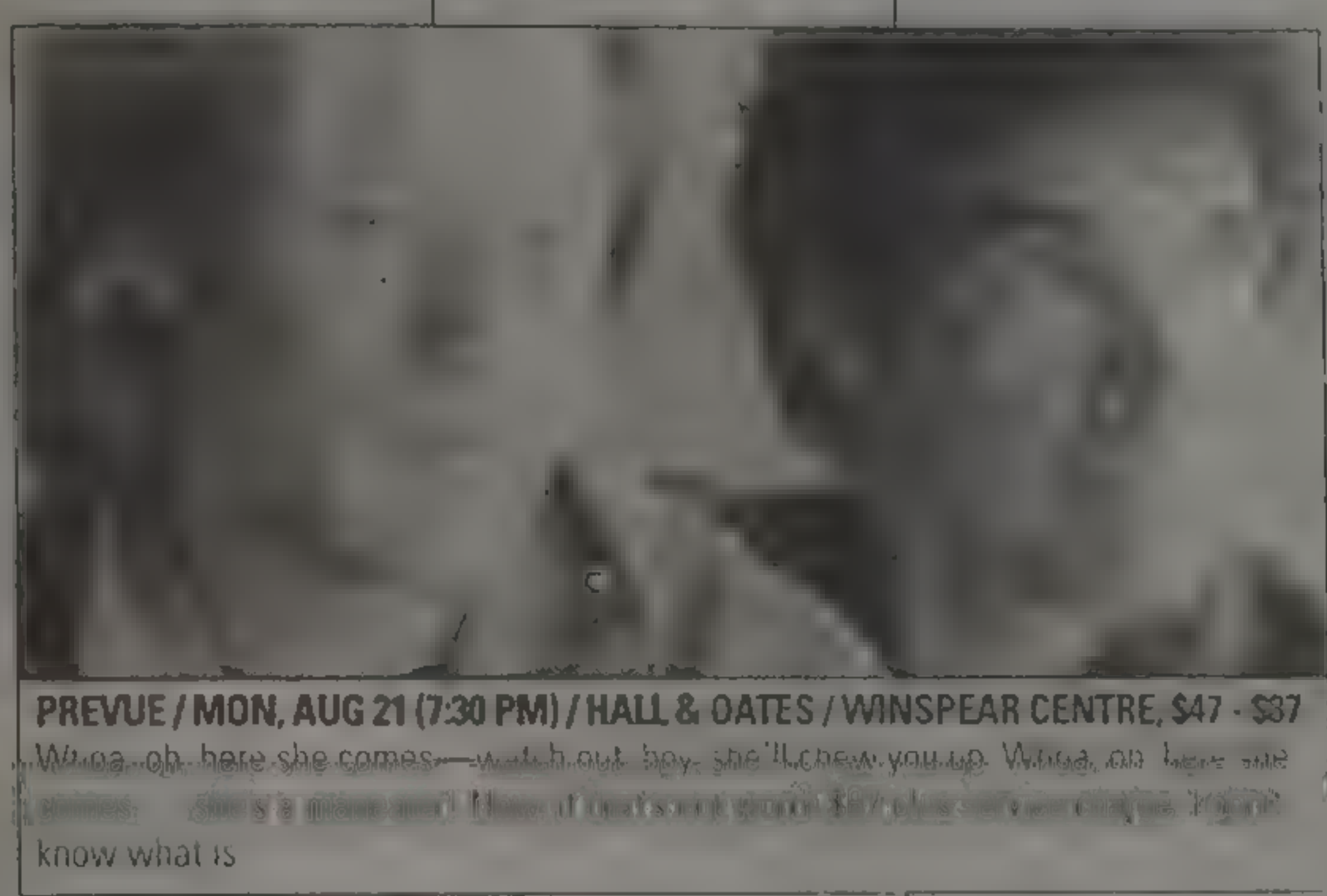
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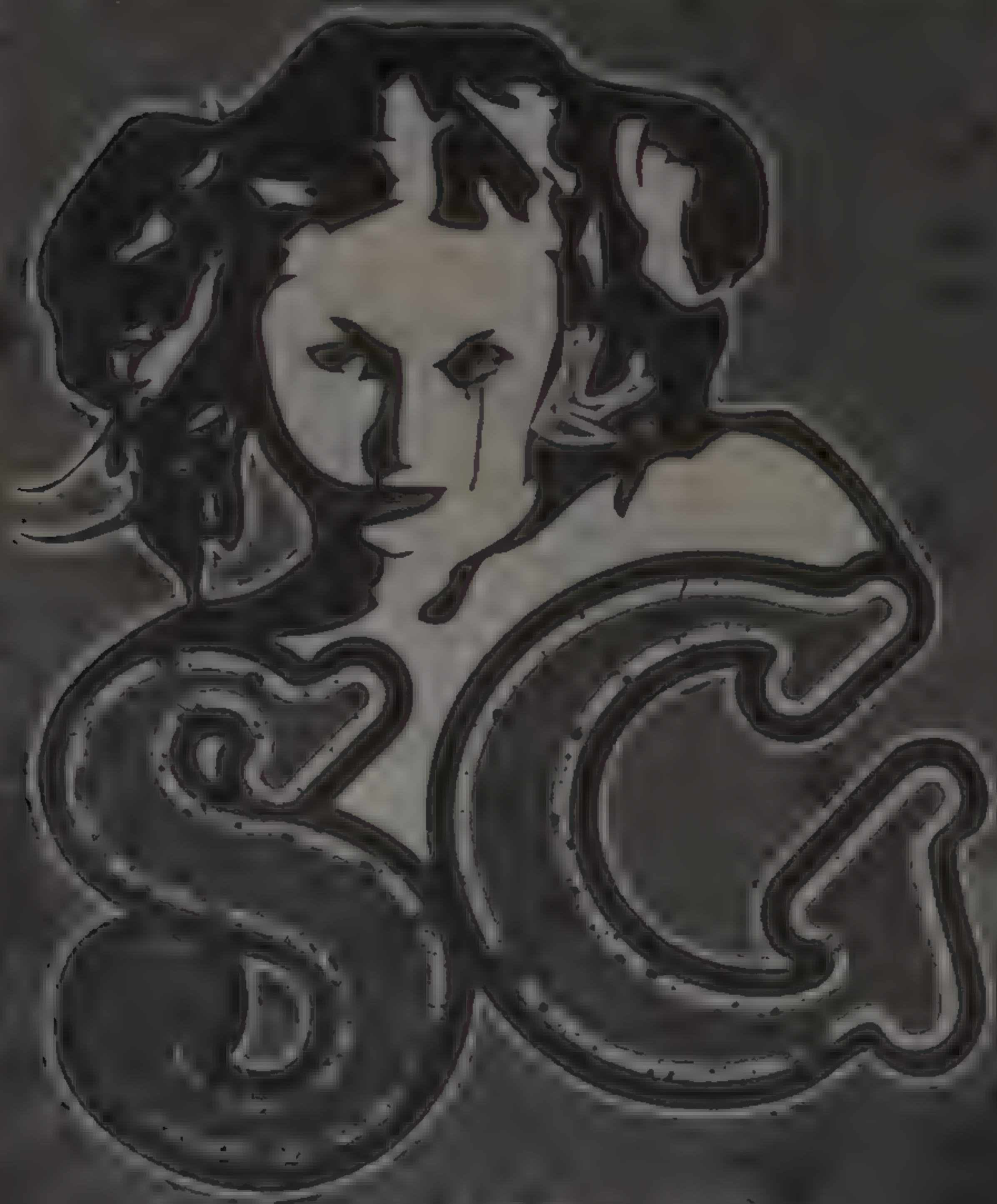
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VICTORIA DUO STILL THE BEST BAND YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF

BRYAN CARROLL / bryan@vuweekly.com

By now, everyone in the whole country should have heard of **Run Chico Run**. With the amount of touring they've done and the quality of the records the two-some puts out, one might wonder why they're not selling out big arenas yet. Thomas Shields—who, along with fellow multi-instrumentalist Matt Skillings, might be best described as a drummer/guitarist/keybordist/maraca player—doesn't have that many more ideas than I do as to why the group remains just under the Canadian indie radar.

"We've got a definite lack of charm," he begins, "and we did some terrible things," he continues, refusing to elaborate. While this journalist will assume that a deal with the devil gone sour is the "terrible thing" that is keeping them down, Shields insists that Run Chico Run doesn't even care about being the biggest band around.

"The goal was never to be popular—we just write the music we like," he says. "Sometimes when we're writing a song we'll ask 'Who's gonna even like this?' but we both like it. We're just truckin' our freak flag up a pole and seeing who salutes it—and if nobody does, at least it's a **SWAY TO GO**."

LUCKILY THE BAND enjoys the nomadic lifestyle they've created for themselves. Being a two-piece makes touring a snap, explains Shields, because they can hop in some other band's van at a moment's notice and go on tour, or they can bring friends in their van to break up the monotony. And monotony seems to be the great constant to touring across a country like

"The road's kind of like forced relaxing," laments Shields, before exclaiming, "at the same time, it's pretty frickin' relaxing." Shields then explains that when Run Chico Run invite a friend to tour with them, the friend invariably gets a little too excited about the prospect of being on the



PREVIEW

SAT. AUG 19 (9 PM)
RUN CHICO RUN
WITH PANURGE, THE OLD SOUL
SIDETRACK CAFÉ, \$10

road with a wild rock band and the Chicos "always have to warn them that this is really boring and shitty."

Boring and shitty touring aside, the band puts on an electrifying live show, which is difficult for two people who Shields says are still learning how to play their own songs. A

lot of the songs were written last time the band was in studio, he explains, so now they're figuring out how to make all the sounds they laid down on tape transfer to the stage. The band has no firm plans as to when they'll be recording again, but in the meantime "there's been lots of experimenting with psychedelics and hedonistic activities," in order to prepare

I'm a firm believer in hedonism," explains Shields. "If you let pleasure be your guide, you can't go wrong." ▼

Smoothride keep takin' care of business

BRYAN CARROLL / bryan@vuweekly.com

There are not very many bands with such a commitment to pleasing their fans as Edmonton's **Smoothride**, and a recent gig at Whyte Avenue's Urban Lounge provides an excellent example of this philosophy, explains the band's drummer Tim Francis.

"We greeted everyone at the door with a free beer," he says. "We're always looking for win-win-win relationships. As long as we're thinking of everyone else first, the karma will take care of itself."

THE BAND SHOWS a similar commitment when it comes to creating their

PREVIEW

SAT. AUG 19 (8 PM)
SMOOTHRIDE
DELCLAYNA EARTH FESTIVAL
NEAR ATHABASCA, \$45 (ALL AGES)

music. As Francis explains, no detail of what they write is small enough for the band to overlook. The trio spends a lot of time thinking about the creative choices they are making and are quick to revise anything they're not entirely happy with.

"We can recognize when something sounds too cookie cutter and that doesn't sit well with us," he says. "We don't want to sound exactly like anyone else."

The sound the band has been working on, which Francis describes as a mix between Red Hot Chili Peppers and Incubus, has landed them a gig at the upcoming Delclayna Earth Festival, which is taking place this weekend on an organic farm near Athabasca. This gig, the band hopes will be the first step towards much bigger things for Smoothride

"We'd like to try to turn this band into a viable stand alone business," says Francis, explaining that up until now, university was a big priority while the band was forced to take a back seat. "School's done now," he says, "and it's time to flip those priorities." ▼

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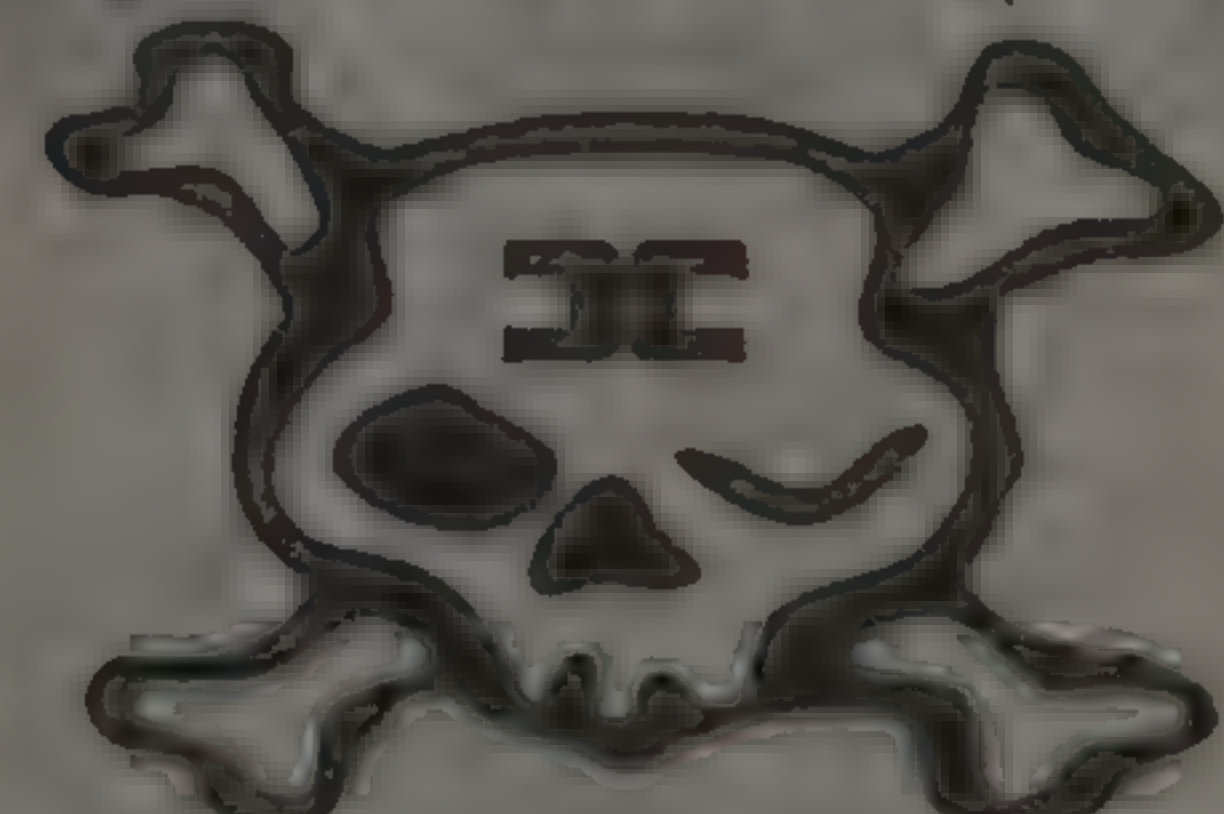
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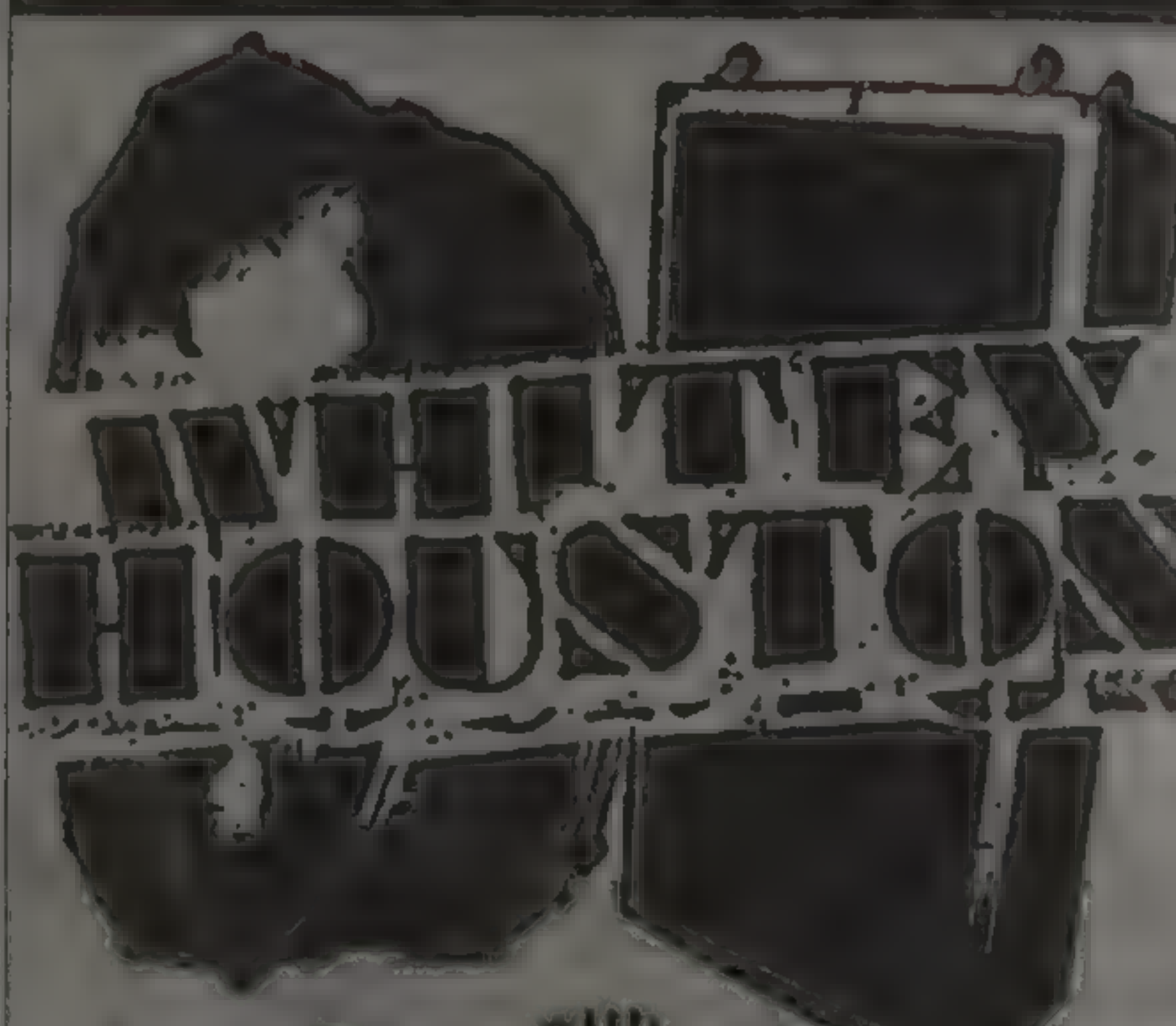
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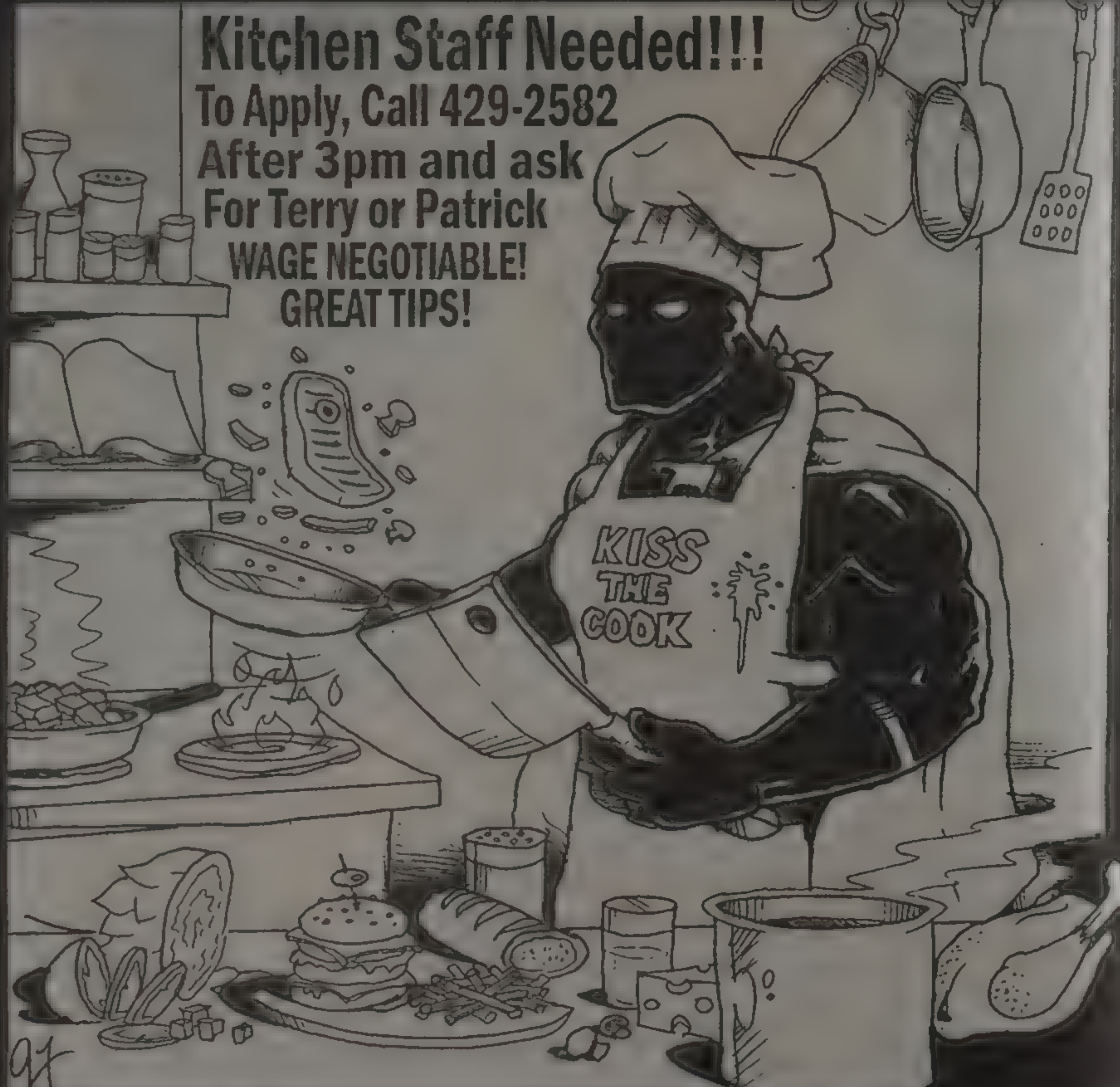
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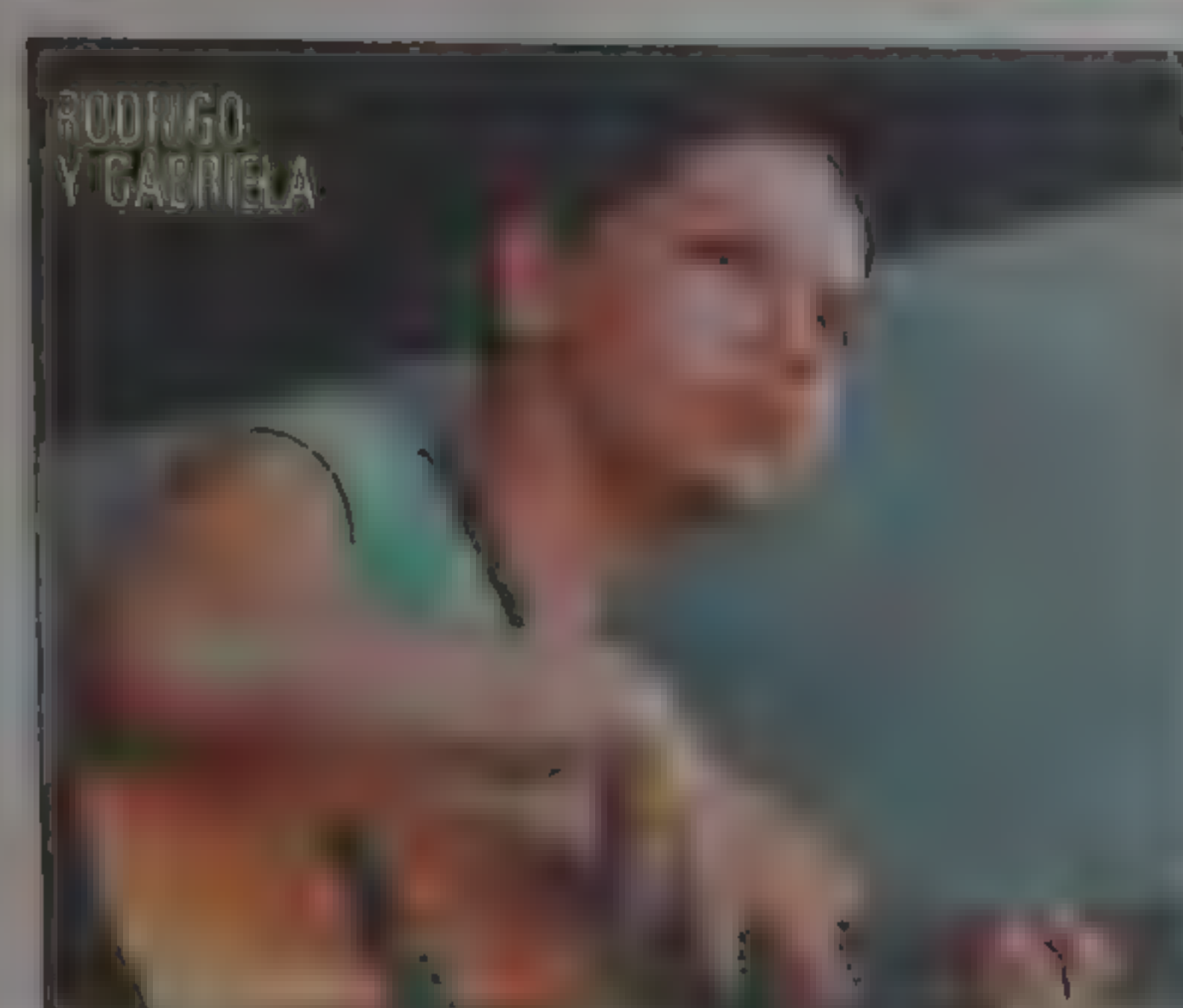
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The hill was alive with the sound of music ... and hurdy-gurdies

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vancouverweekly.com

The four days that make up the Edmonton Folk Music Festival are filled with dichotomies: rain or shine, up close and squished or up the hill and scattered, take in the show or head back to the beer garden.

But the biggest gulf of all is between those patrons who come out to see the familiar big names (and have grumbled for the past few years about how they feel the headliners at the Edmonton Folk Fest compare less than favourably to those in Calgary) and those who relish the intimate workshops and the chance discovery of previously unheard gems.

While the mainstage big guns certainly pleased, with solid performances put in by as varied a selection as Bedouin Soundclash, the Neville Brothers, Hawksley Workman, Feist, Bruce Cockburn, David Gray and Sarah Harmer—which collectively show just how diverse this festival of folk has become—it was the work-

NEVILLE BROTHERS FOLK FEST

shops and lesser-knowns that created the real buzz

K'Naan, the incredible Somali-born hip-hop artist from Toronto who was slotted in the regrettable spot of opening the festival as the first act on Thursday's mainstage, was the undisputed sleeper hit of the festival. His infectious beats, catchy flow, smart lyrics and inviting stage presence created a stir with the folkies. A crowded and appreciative Saturday morning workshop with UK-based Show of Hands and the anarchists of Chumbawamba, which brought a smile to the face of the initially hesitant rapper, cemented the impact of his mainstage show. By later that day his were the only discs sold out at the merch tent

Another buzz, albeit of a slightly different nature, was created by Vancouver-based klezmer-whisky-rabbi Geoff

Berner. From a mainstage 'tweener' (that is, a short performance filling the time between headliners) rendition of "Magnet Line," in which the hill joined Berner in the French-military-mocking refrain of "Stupid! Stupid!" to the follow-up choice of "Lucky God Damn Jew" to the workshop stage public service announcement of "Don't Play Cards for Money with Corby Lund" (which features a verse detailing Lund's recent Australian tour, a trip that reportedly resulted in card-playing koala bears being forced to prostitute themselves to pay their gambling debts to the Albertan troubadour and card shark), the brilliant Berner had the crowd and the performers on stage with him at once laughing out loud, applauding and shaking their heads in disbelief.

Quebec-based Juno winners Le Vent du Nord—featuring the infamous hurdy-gurdy—and roots quintet The Duhks put on frenzied workshop performances that made it impossible to

sit still, including an unforgettably raucous dance-filled joint effort in the midst of a mid-morning hailstorm on Saturday

The brilliant Vishwa Mohan Bhatt on his self-invented 19-string mohan veena, played ragas that were a sight to behold, while the multinational Baka Beyond introduced the infectious percussion-driven sound of the Baka Pygmies of Cameroon to appreciative crowds. The "acoustic-folk-rock-metal" of Mexican guitarists Rodrigo y Gabriela (which, due to a scheduling mix-up on one of the stages, I never got to see) were described to me by a fellow folkie as "one of the greatest things I've ever seen."

The Folk Fest has a wonderful tradition, shown again this year by the mainstage set of 2001 festival darlings The Waifs, of bringing sleeper hits back in subsequent years. If the tradition continues, next year will most assuredly be another sold-out weekend on the hill. ▼

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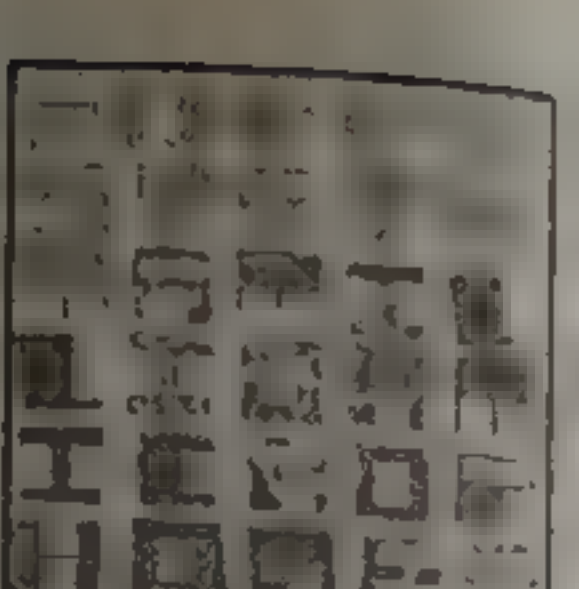
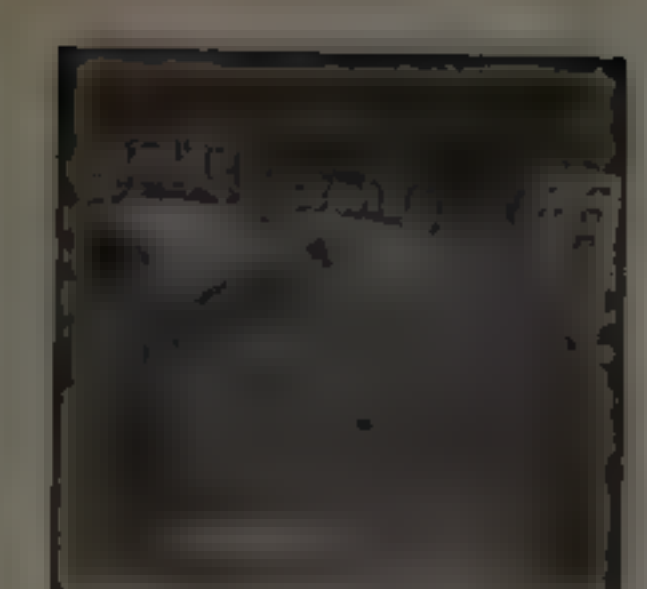
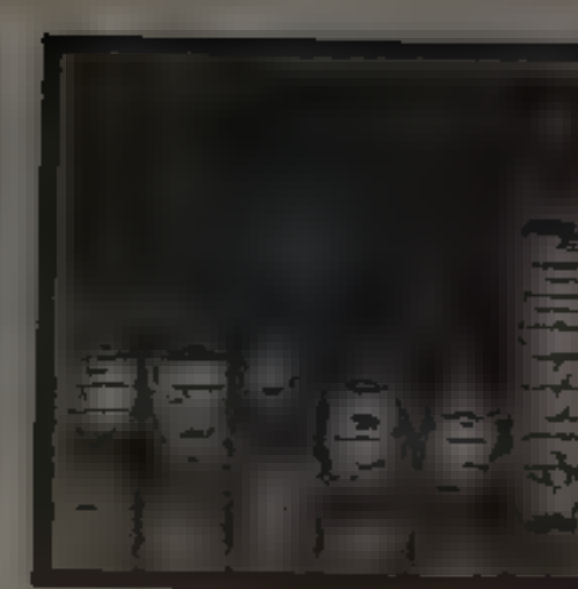
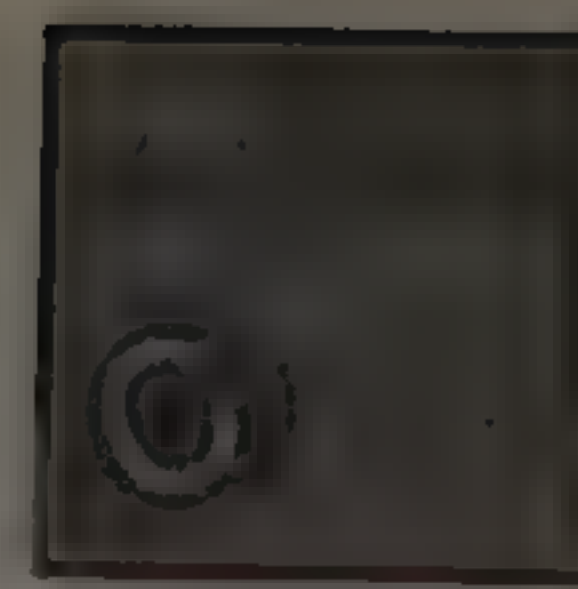
FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 15 (VELVET UNDERGROUND)
RED RAM
CURRENT SWELL
MICHELLE BOUDREAU

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 14 (VELVET UNDERGROUND)
WIZOM GUILLEM

WWW.STARLITEROOM.CA

ALBUM REVIEWS

NEW SOUNDS



IVAN ROSENBERG
CLAWHAMMER AND BANJO
SLOSH TONE

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuweekly.com



I spent the day with this album while driving through several of the small, outlying towns which surround Edmonton. The truth is, there could be no finer soundtrack for a day on the roads, rolling through the gentle prairies of this province. Ivan Rosenberg is an accomplished player out of Bellingham, Washington who plays clawhammer, banjo and the resonator guitar. Rosenberg's choice of instruments (as well as those of the other players—guitar, mandolin and fiddle) gives *Clawhammer* a sepia-like shading. Some of Rosenberg's music has appeared in the western series *Deadwood* and it's easy to understand why.

Thankfully, Rosenberg does more than just picking out the notes: he also writes damn fine songs. Though most are instrumentals, every song is memorable, from "Hamish's Morphine Pill" to "The Creptid Mule," creeping their way into the mind just as any catchy vocal tune would. The one exception to the instrumental approach is the album's centerpiece, a haunting version of the traditional murder ballad "Poor Ellen Smith," featuring Rosenberg harmonizing with Mary Lucey's mournful vocal.

After that, "Big Arm, Montana" kicks off the second half of the album as though Rosenberg is sending a bunch of cowboys off on a cattle drive all the way to Abilene and, save for the slow slide of "Terrapenne," the last few songs continue in this energetic direction. Hell, just sitting here listening to the disc makes me want to get right back out there on the road

JURASSIC 5
FEEDBACK
INTERSCOPE

JOEL KELLY / joel@vuweekly.com



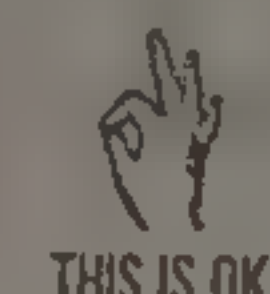
Mathematics and hip hop usually go together like water and oil, but consider the following equation: smart, funny lyrics + great beats = a great rap album. Throw in the cosine of some old school keepin' it real and you have a pretty good description of Jurassic 5's seminal first two albums.

However, on their latest release, *Feedback*, Jurassic 5 has fiddled with that seemingly simple formula. With the loss of Cut Chemist, an integral member of the group, J5 subtracts most of the freshness in said great beats and multiplies that by a mediocre collaboration with Dave Matthews to come up a record that is quite often exponentially derivative.

Nonetheless, Jurassic 5 are some of the smartest lyricists in hip-hop, and their originality finds resonance with a few thumping rhythms on the latter half of the record. While it's frustrating to listen to what feels like filler on the rest of the album, *Feedback* is still better than most of what's out there, and you don't need a mathematics degree to figure that out.

GOLDEN SMOG
ANOTHER FINE DAY
LOST HIGHWAY

JOEL KELLY / joel@vuweekly.com



Here's a familiar theme you may or may not have experienced: a bunch of buddies, fuelled by a desire to make loud noises and drink beer together, decide to start a band. For the typical

band, this is as far as it goes, with maybe one or two shows at a local bar attended mostly by significant others.

For Jeff Tweedy of Wilco, Gary Louris of the Jayhawks and notable members of other big-name bands who make up Golden Smog, their fun cover band instead turned into something a little more concrete.

At its, ahem, finest, *Another Fine Day* combines the best elements of its component parts, sounding like a mixture of Wilco and Spoon. At its um, not finest, it sounds derivative and cynical as different band members try to pull Golden Smog's identity in different directions. However, at a swollen 63 minutes and 15 songs, there is a quality album here, if you're willing to sift through the shite first.

It's pretty hard to fault a gimmicky side project for producing a record that sounds like a gimmicky side project, but if you're willing to forgo your expectations of another *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* you'll be pleasantly surprised.

SUPERSYSTEM
A MILLION MICROPHONES
FAB

JARED MAJESKI / jared@vuweekly.com



When you're listening to an album, and all you can think about is how much the band sounds like someone else, does that mean that the album you're listening to sucks? In the case of Supersystem's latest release *A Million Microphones* ... well, I'm still undecided.

Supersystem, a four-piece NY/DC outfit that formed out of the ashes of indie group El Guapo, sounds like an electronic version of Cake. Vocalist Pete Cafarella sings and speaks with the same non sequitur flair as Cake frontman John McCrea, and both groups have lyrics rife with irony and witty observation. With "The Pinnacle of Experience," Cafarella and Supersystem take jabs and hooks at teenage drug use ("Give the drugs to the kids / All the kids do the drugs").

Literally, *A Million Microphones* is more than solid—it's near-poetic. Musically, however, I found the album rather choppy and difficult to groove to. Supersystem does run the gamut on this disc, stretching their sound from purely electronic ("Not the Concept") to a more indie feel ("White Light / White Light"). But the band's conceptual and experimental side prevents *A Million Microphones* from being more dancable.

EASY STAR ALL-STARS
RADIOHEAD
EASY STAR

ROSS MOROZ / ross@vuweekly.com



Radiohead are, undeniably, a hell of a rock band, maybe even the best—if not, at the very least, the most prolific.

10649.124 street
780.732.1132
www.listenrecords.net

a lazarus lexon (3cd+dvd)
loros

let me go, let me go
let me go

million microphones

top 10 sellers

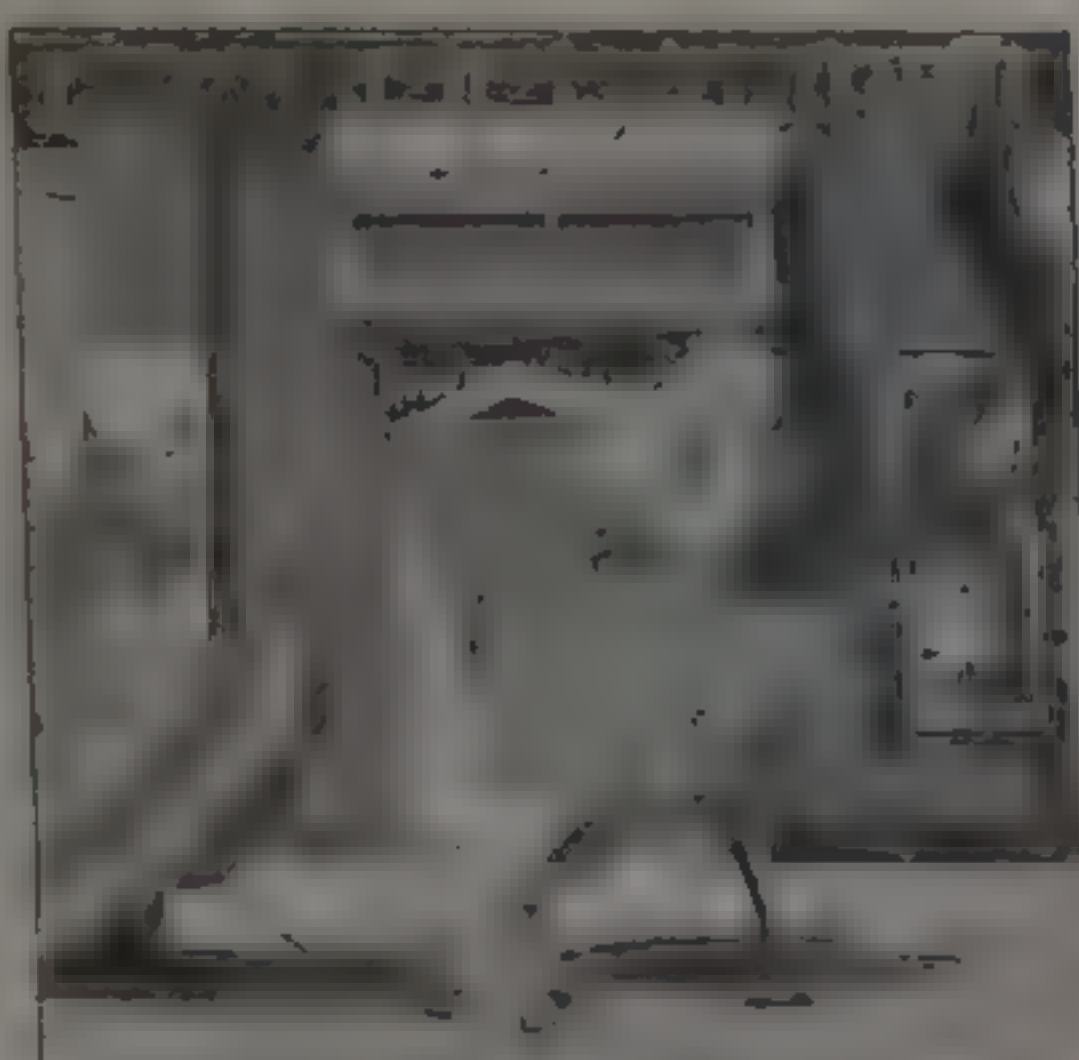
01. not saying just saying shout out out out out
02. avaral comets on fire
03. return to cookie mountain tv on the radio
04. the avalanche sutfen stevens
05. pink borts
06. happy new year onelda
07. the warning hot chip
08. the looks mstrkrft
09. the eraser thom yorke
10. a/l ladyhawk

get here quick on bus # 3, 5, or 135 west from downtown or the #7 north from the southside



Jesse Gander discusses Cyndi Lauper's *She's So Unusual*

RETRO **DISTANT REPLAY**
STEVEN SANDOR
distantreplay@vuweekly.com



Jesse Gander is somewhat of a stalwart on Vancouver's music scene. He's a renowned producer who has worked with dozens of bands and has been in a few musical acts of note himself, including math-rocker Bullard Rice.

These days, he is touring Canada with Ghost House, supporting their brand-new album, *Departures*. As Gander has the luxury of having more studio time than any indie act could ever dream of, the album is far more complex and layered than you'd think an indie-pop effort should be. It's fueled by Gander's electric piano, but time and dynamic changes keep the listener guessing. Whether it's experimental music tinged with pop or pop music transformed, it's definitely not your average listen.

But Gander's pick as the album that most influenced his musical career comes right out of left field—he goes back all the way to his childhood and picks the '80s kitsch classic *She's So Unusual* by Cyndi Lauper.

Lauper was a pop queen of the '80s, but unlike most of today's divas, she didn't surround herself with limos, designer clothes and expensive jewelry. Instead, she hung out with professional wrestlers—with Captain Lou Albano even getting a guest spot in the video for her breakthrough hit "Girls Just Want to Have Fun."

Of course, that song was one of the

biggest of the decade, so much so that it overshadowed a slew of other hits from that album, including "She Bop" and "All Through the Night."

For Gander, he was pulled to the album after hearing "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" on his parents' car stereo. He was in Grade 2 at the time.

"I remember telling my mom that I liked that song, and it was the first conscious choice I had ever made about liking music," he says. "It was my music, something that I had picked out."

He was so enthusiastic about what he had just heard on the radio, that his mother offered to buy him the album (it being the '80s, it was on cassette, of course).

"I got a ghetto blaster and the cassette," he laughs. "I played it eight times in a row as soon as I got it."

"That cassette is still out with me on tour," Gander continues. "It's a black cassette, as all the writing has been worn out from the friction of my thumb pulling the cassette in and out of the player." ▽

HAIKU **QUICK SPINS**
WHITEY AND TB PLAYER
quickspins@vuweekly.com

THE TYDE
THREE'S CO
ROUGH TRADE

Loosey-goosey pop
No new ground here; just nice walks
Down old, well-worn paths

SLAYER
CHRIST ILLUSION
AMERICAN

Same old metal course
War, religion, hate: all suck
Steady as she goes!

TEARS FOR FEARS
SECRET WORLD
XIII BIS

Live, lukewarm versions
Of all the band's greatest hits
With half-hearted cheers

HELLOGOODBYE
ZOMBIES! ALIENS! VAMPIRES!
DINOSAURS!
DRIVE-THRU

There's potential here.
But it's mired in cheese and
Overproduction

STRAPPING YOUNG LAD
THE NEW BLACK
CENTURY MEDIA

Serious or not,
These guys still manage to scare
The shit out of me

ADAM GREEN
JACKET FULL OF DANGER
ROUGH TRADE

A shameful, sad joke!
Are you too cool and aloof
To try anymore?

MATTHEW FRIEDBERGER
WINTER WOMEN / HOLY GHOST
LANGUAGE SCHOOL
859 RECORDINGS

Total ear pleaser
Choppy synth pop kookery
With "gasp" melody!

NO MEAN NO
ALL ROADS LEAD TO AUSFAHRT
ANTACID AUDIO

Older Gentlemen
Still playing circles around
The competition

DMX
YEAR OF THE DOG...AGAIN
SONY/BMG

Nothing new here boss:
Skits, thuggish posturing and
1 million N-bombs

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CHRIS BOTTI
www.chrisbotti.com

MONDAY
OCTOBER 2

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Charge by Phone 980-428-1414
or online www.winspearcentre.com

WINSPEAR CENTRE

DAVID BYN JOURNAL

GOODBYE TO YOU

6df

MONDAY 23rd

8:30

UNDERDOG

of their era. So I can understand why there seems to be a new Radiohead cover album coming out every other week or so lately. Their songs are complex but catchy, lending themselves fairly easily to disparate and inventive interpretations, and their catalogue is expansive and diverse enough to afford participating artists the ability to pick a track well suited to their particular style. Should be a recipe for sure-fire awesome-

Well, no, not really, as it turns out. Most Radiohead covers are bland and mediocre at best and painful at worst, and the dub and reggae reworkings of the music of Thom Yorke and company featured on *Radiodread* are, sadly, no exception. From a limp and uninspired "Exit Music (For a Film)" to an unintentionally hilarious ska version of "Paranoid Android," complete with sliding trombones making an embarrassing mess out of the original's signature spy-movie-theme-on-acid guitar riff, *Radiodread* succinctly illustrates how even the best of songs can be butchered by lazy, paint-by-numbers cover artists.

PHARRELL WILLIAMS
IN MY MIND
IN PERSPECTIVE

François Zolan / francois@vuweekly.com

A confession: I don't mind Justin Timberlake. Sure, he's a bland, lily-white, play-it-safe pop princess of the first order, but some of his stuff is actually not all that bad, as much as it pains me to admit it. It's mainstream, commercial, un-ironic pop, of course, but it has a surprising, almost Michael Jackson-esque pop edge to it—quite the feat for a guy whose previous claim to fame was being neither the fat guy nor the gay guy in a B-list boy band.

I always kind of assumed that this disconcerting un-suckiness couldn't have possibly come from the smirking ex N'SYNC-er, and therefore must have been the product of JT collaborator and ex N.E.R.D. and Neptune Pharrell Williams. As such, I was quietly excited to get my grubby little hands on a copy of *In My Mind*, Williams's first release as a solo artist, giddily expecting all the funk and pop smarts that made a half-dozen or so of the cuts on *Justified* so annoyingly likable without any of the requisite pop-star bullshit.

And ... I was wrong. Man, was I wrong. Instead of a tight, lean, all-killer-no-filler pop album, Williams delivers a disc full of all of the boastful self-indulgence and empty posturing of the worst of contemporary paint-by-numbers pop. Worst of all, apparently I have seriously underestimated Justin Timberlake, and, fuck, this album deserves a big fat "sucks" just for making me admit that in print.

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August 19 & 20
11 am to 7 pm

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Arts and Food Vendors, Beer
Gardens and much more!

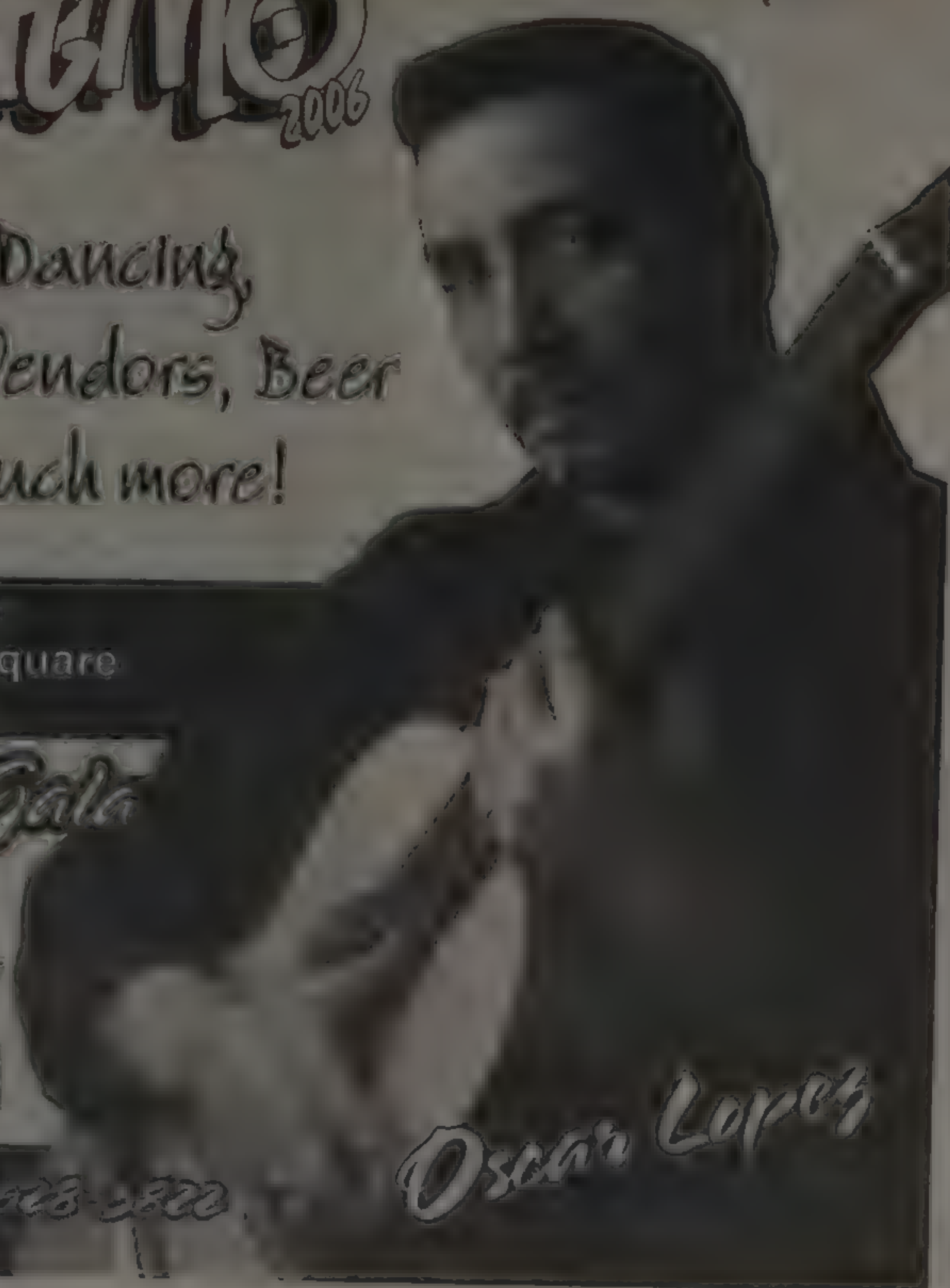
Free Admission at
Sir Winston Churchill Square
100 St. & 102 Ave.

Fuego Latino Gala

Saturday, August 19 at 8pm
Winspear Centre
Tickets Available at Winspear
Box Office • 428-1414



www.winspearcentre.ca • 428-1414



Oscar Lopez

'The horror... the horror!!!'

TYSON KABAN / tyson@vuweekly.com

Their name immediately conjures up visions of those classic films, the ones that are filled with campy dialogue, outrageous crime and corny carnage; films that are so bad, they're good.

And much like the cinematic genre that shares their name, local rockers **The B-Movies** aren't really interested with playing in the mainstream. Whether their music is considered good, bad, or even so bad it's good, the only thing they're really concerned about is having some cheeky fun while playing it.

"We have a lot of fun doing what we do. Everything's a bit tongue-in-cheek. We like to take the piss out of stuff, and we totally play up the campiness of B-movies in our stuff, both lyrically and musically," says Quinn Clark, the band's lead vocalist and rhythm guitarist.

"For instance, we play some rockish hillbilly numbers that are about drinking and going to prison, and a couple of songs about werewolves and stuff like that. Obviously we don't know anything about going to prison, but we have fun singing about it."

LIKE THE WORK OF B-movie masters like Russ Meyer and John Waters, the band's music is probably an acquired taste. A mash of rock, punk, and the

PREVIEW

SAT. AUG 19 (8 PM)
THE B-MOVIES
WITH RAYGUN COWBOYS, SOUTHSIDE RIOTS,
THE SKAM
THE STUDIO, \$8 (ALL AGES)

hillbilly kind of country—think Elvis, if he was an aggressive drunk—it's not the most conventional music you'll ever hear.

But according to Quinn, ever since the band first came on the scene a few years back, the B-Movies have managed to attract a rather diverse fanbase. Preferring to play all-ages shows, Quinn says you'll find a large contingent of the underage at the band's live gigs, as well as some folks who, for some reason or another, seem to really enjoy the music made by the B-Movies.

"It really surprises me that we have been appealing to a large group of people. We get a reaction from kids as much as we do from older people. Like we've had grandparents at our shows, come up and tell us that they like our music," he says.

"I think it might be because we have a few weepy ballads mixed in with the psycho punk-rock stuff," he continues. "So whoever comes to our shows, you can either just sit there and enjoy your whiskey sour, or hop right in the pit." ▽

2006-2007 Season

Classical Music Sampler

Only
\$80 for
Seven
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The Edmonton Chamber Music Society presents
Nai-Yuan Hu, violin, &
Jacques Després, piano
Saturday, September 30, 2006, 8pm
Convocation Hall, University of Alberta

Sundays at 3 Organ Recitals presents
Haig Mardirosian:
Shades of Romanticism
Sunday, October 15, 2006, 3pm
Francis Winspear Centre for Music

Mill Creek Colliery Band presents
Eine Kleine
Brass Musik
Sunday, November 5, 2006, 3pm
MacDougall United Church

The Alberta Baroque Ensemble presents
Music for a
Festive Season
Sunday, December 3, 2006, 7:30pm
Robertson-Wesley United Church

The Edmonton Classical Guitar Society presents
Jerome Ducharme
Friday, January 12, 2007, 8pm
Muttart Hall, Alberta College

"Music at Convocation Hall" presents
"As You Like It"
February/March
Convocation Hall, University of Alberta

Pro Coro Canada presents
Good Friday
at the Winspear
Friday, April 6, 2007, 7:30pm
Francis Winspear Centre for Music

Pro Coro Canada
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toll free 1-877-888-1757
www.tixonthesquare.ca

VUEWEEKLY



REVUE / FRI, AUG 11 / SILVER MT ZION / SIDETRACK CAFÉ The three gals and four gents of Thee Silver Mt Zion Memorial Orchestra & Tra-La-La Band squeezed onto the small-ish Sidetrack stage last Friday for a well-attended but intimate performance. Their post-rock sound, framed by siren-like vocals, a half-dozen or so stringed instruments and the occasional drum set, satiated the sweaty hipster fans that packed in front of the stage either standing in awe or singing along. These salivating enthusiasts were not disappointed by what was undeniably an impressive show of talent in the dimly-lit Sidetrack Café. —NEAL WILDING / neal@vuweekly.com

EVENTS WEEKLY

SEND YOUR FREE LISTINGS TO 426.2839
E-MAIL GLENYS AT
LISTINGS@VUEWEEKLY.COM
HEADLINE IS FRIDAY AT 3 PM

CLUBS/LECTURES

CONVERSATION CAFÉ Unity of Edmonton
10212 106 Ave • Meeting presented
by Yvonne Poutine • Every Tue (1-3pm)

EDMONTON GHOST TOURS (WALKING)
www.edmontonghosttours.com • Meet in
front of the Old Strathcona Courthouse, next to Walderdale
at 10352 53 Ave • Take a ghostly
walk through Old Strathcona while true stories
of the city's ghosts and haunts
• Sat Aug 31, Mon Thu (9pm) • \$5

RELAXATION 11103 101 St www.garden-
of-eden.com/147400141 • Garden Samten
of the Buddhist Meditation Society by
Sharon Dharmapala, Beginner Tue
7-9pm, advanced Sun
10-12pm

SELF ESTEEM SUPPORT GROUP (496-5930)
• For women who are experiencing chaos as
result of a life crisis and who feel isolated •
Meets each week

WASKANEHAN TRAIL ASSOCIATION •
(498) Free guided hike, approx. 9 km at
Strathcona Wilderness Centre; Aug. 20 (9am);
Meet by the MacDonald's at Capilano Mall, 55
101 Ave • (435-1197) Free guided hike,
approx. 12 km at Whitemud Adventure Trail;
Aug. 27 (9am); meet by SE corner of Southgate
at 111 St, Whitemud Drive

WOMEN IN BLACK In front of the Old
Strathcona Farmers' Market • Silent vigil
every 1st and 3rd Sat ea month, stand in
silence for a world without violence (10-11am)

QUEER LISTINGS

GRACE Faculty of Education, U of A Campus
• Sex, sexual, gender differences in education
• Culture focus group • Contact Dr. Andre
Grace (andre.grace@ualberta.ca) for info

BISexual WOMEN'S COFFEE GROUP
www.bisexualwomen.com/group/bwdm Edmonton
• A group for bisexual and bisexual
• 2nd Thu ea month (7-8pm)

FOOTS AND SADDLES 10242-106 St (423-
1064) • Large room with pool tables, restaur-
ant, shows, barbers only

BUDDYS NITE CLUB 11725 Jasper Ave (488-
1000) • Open daily 9-3, Fri 8-3 • Mon:
Major strip contest (12:30); DJ Alvaro,
Play Love • Tue: Free pool, Malebox, DJ
Arrowchaser • Wed: Gurlz Gone Wild Midnite:
with DJ Eddy Toonflash, Mia Fellow, Ashley
Yohko Oh-no, guests • Thu: Wet Undies
contest (12:30); with DJ Squiggles, Yohko Oh-
no • Fri: DJ Alvaro dance party, male strippers
• Sat: Theme parties, leather/fetish dungeon,
pool, pool tournament, DJ Arrowchaser •
Sun: Stardust Lounge with Mz Bianca and Mz
Unity Fair (11pm), DJ Eddy Toonflash

DOWN UNDER MENS BATH HOUSE 12224
101 Ave (482-7960) • Open 24/7 •
www.dymh.com

**EDMONTON RAINBOW BUSINESS ASSO-
CIATION** www.edmontonrba.org • Monthly
business mixer: Network and share con-
tacts in the GLBT business community •
1st and 3rd Wed ea month

HIV NETWORK OF EDMONTON SOCIETY
100, 11456 Jasper Ave (488-5742) or con-
tact 73hivedmonton.com • Programs and sup-
port services for people affected and infected
by HIV/AIDS and related illnesses.
Counselling, referrals, support groups, harm
reduction, education, advocacy and public
awareness campaigns

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus • Campus-based
organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-
identified and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate
student, academic, straight allies and support
staff • 3rd Thu ea month (fall/winter terms):

Speakers Series: Contact Kris (kwell@ualber-
ta.ca)

LIVING POSITIVE 404, 10408-124 St,
www.edmlivingpositive.ca (1-877-975-
9448/488-5768) • Providing confidential peer
support to people living with HIV • Every Tue
(7-9pm): Support group • Daily drop-in, peer
counselling

MADELEINE SANAM FOUNDATION Faculté
St. Jean, 8406 Marie-Anne Gaboury (91 St) Rm
3-18 (490-7332) • Program for HIV/AIDS pre-
vention, treatment and harm reduction in
French, English and other African languages •
Every 3rd and 4th Sat (9am-5pm) • Free (mem-
ber)/\$10 (membership) • Pre-register

MAKING WAVES SWIMMING CLUB
www.geocities.com/makingwaves_edm •
Recreational and competitive swimming with
coaching, beginners encouraged to participate.
Socializing after practices • Every Tue and Thu

PRIDE CENTRE OF EDMONTON 9540-111
Ave (488-3234) • Open 10am-10pm • Open
10am-10pm • Bears Movie Night: Bears Club:
last Sun ea month (1-6pm, TV room) • Trans
Education/Support Group: Support and educa-
tion for transsexual, transgendered, inter-
sexed, two-spirited and questioning individu-
als; 1st, 3rd, last Sun ea month (2-4pm) with
Cody • Sunday Night Men's Discussion
Group: Mens social and discussion group,
every Sun (7pm); Rob Wells at
robwells780@hotmail.com • Friends and
Family Playgroup: 2nd Sun ea month (2-4pm)
with Noelle, friendsandfamilyplaygroup-
owner@yahoo.com • Monday Movie
Night: Movie nights with themed movies and
discussion afterwards; every Mon •
Community Potluck Dinner: 2nd Mon ea month
(7pm) • Bisexual Discussion Group: Mixed
social and discussion group drop-in; 1st, 3rd
Tue ea month (7pm) Rm A, with Vanessa edm-
bigroup@yahoo.com • TTIQ Alliance:
Support meeting for transgender, transsexual,
intersex and questioning 2nd Tue ea month,
ttiqualiance@shaw.ca, 718-1412 • GLBT
Seniors Drop-In: Every Wed (10:30am-3:30pm)
with Jeff Bovee, 488-3234 • HIV Outreach:
Drop-in circle every other Thu (7pm) • In
Together Out Together Get Together: A wel-
coming group for GLBT members in their 20s,
30s and 40s, 1st and 3rd Fri ea month, hosted
by Robert Blatchford • Youth Understanding
Youth: Youth support and social group, every
Sat (7-9pm); yuy@shaw.ca,
www.members.shaw.ca/yuy • NDP LGBT
Caucus: last Sun ea month with Jay, 488-3234

PRISM BAR AND GRILL 10524-101 St, back
entrance (990-0038) • Lesbian and gay
bar/restaurant

THE ROOST 10345-104 St (426-3150) • Open
Thu Sun 8pm-3am; Fri Sat 8pm-4am • Thu:
Gorgeous featuring hostess Dr. Lexxi Tronic.
Featuring Drag Kings and Queens, burlesque
and rotating game shows. Bands upstairs
monthly • Fri: All Request Dance Party every
Friday with DJ Jazzy • Sat: Always like New
Years Eve: with DJ Dan (retro) downstairs and
DJ Jazzy (new music) upstairs • Sun: A fabu-
lous Drag show every Sunday featuring host-
ess Connie Lingua. Rotating guests, live
singers and drag Queens, with contests, \$2
cover; free pool all night long • Weekends:
\$4 (members)/\$6 (non-member)/Sun \$2 cover

STEAMWORKS 11745 Jasper Ave (451-5554)
• Steam baths open daily (24hrs)

WOODYS 11723 Jasper Ave (488-6557) •
Open Daily (noon) • Sat-Wed: With Annie and
Tizzy (7-12pm) • Tue, Sat-Sun: Pool tourna-
ments

SPECIAL EVENTS

DELCLAYNA EARTH FESTIVAL Private
Organic Farm, 5km SSE of Athabasca (934-
8848) • Alberta's organic, all-genre music fes-
tival featuring all types of music, family enter-
tainment, a market and much more • Aug. 17-
20 • \$40 (3-day adv)/\$95 (3-day gate)

DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL Government
House Park • Six dragon boats race to the
finish line • Aug. 18-20

EXPO LATINO Sir Winston Churchill Sq •
Featuring the best in live Latin music and dance,
an interactive art and food market and a beer
garden • Aug. 19-20 (11am-7pm) • Free

THE FUEGO LATINO GALA Winspear Centre,
Sir Winston Churchill Sq (428-1414) •
Featuring Latin music and dance including
Ache Brasil, Oscar Lopez, Tango de Oro, the
Vivancos7 Ballet Flamenco, and many others •
Aug. 19 (7:30pm) • Tickets available at the

Winspear box office

FURRY FRIENDS RESCUE RUN Broadmoor
Lake Park, Sherwood Park (447-3336) •
Fundraiser for the rescue and educational pro-
grams of the Alberta Ferret Society • Aug. 20
(12-4pm)

HISTORICAL BUS TOURS Buses leave from
the north side of City Hall, bus stop 1123 •
The first tour of the day will be to the
Highlands area and second tour of the day will
be to the Glenora area • Until Aug. 17 (Tue,
Thu at 1:30pm and 7pm; and Sat at 10:30am
and 2pm) • \$5 at TIX on the Square

KARAOKE

BAR-B-BAR 4249-23 Ave (461-2244) • Every
Thu and Sat (9pm). James, Mr. Entertainment
• Every Sun (7pm): James, Mr. Entertainment

CASTLEDOWN'S PUB 16753-100 St •
Every Tue (9pm-1am); with Off-Key
Entertainment

CAMELOT SPORTS BAR 10231-95 St (425-
4298) • Every Sun (8pm-12); with Jeannie and
Bruce

CHRISTOPHER'S PARTY PUB 37 Millbourne
Rd • Every Tue (9pm); with Sonia, Prosound
Productions

CROWN AND ANCHOR 15277 Castledowns
Rd (472-7636) • Every Thu

ECCO PUB 9605-66 Ave • Every Mon (9pm).
with Sonia, Prosound Productions

FRANCO'S PUB 139th and Victoria Trail •
Every Thu-Sat (9pm-2am); with Jeannie and
Bruce

GAS PUMP 10166-114 St (488-4841) • Every
Tue-Wed (9:30pm): Gord's Best Live Singing
Show

HAWKEYE'S TOO 10044-102 St (421-9398) •
Every Fri (8pm-midnight); with Deb Thulin, Hot
Karaoke Productions

KNIGHTS PUB SOUTH 19 Ave, 105 St (461-
0587) • Every Fri-Sat (10pm-2am), Gord's Best
Live Singing Show

LIONSHEAD PUB Coast Terrace Inn, 4440
Gateway Blvd (431-5815) • Every Sun (8pm)
With Evolution Entertainment

MAZADAR 10725-104 Ave (429-4340) •
Fridays karaoke (5pm-late) with Chris

MOJO'S Best Western Hotel, Fort
Saskatchewan • Every Fri (9:30pm); with
Sonia/Prosound Productions

NEWCASTLE PUB 608-30 Ave (490-1999) •
Every Thu Karaoke

O'CONNOR'S IRISH PUB 9013-88 Ave (469-
8165) • Every Thu (9pm-1am)

ON THE ROCKS 1174C Jasper Ave (482-4767)
• Karaoke Mondays. Every Mon (9pm).
Hosted by Mr. Entertainments' Scott Parsons •
Salsa and the City Thursdays: Latin music and
Salsa lessons; every Thu (9pm)

ORLANDO'S 1 • Every Wed (9pm-1am) with
Off-Key Entertainment

ORLANDO'S 3 6104-134 St • Every Mon
(9pm-1am); with Off-Key Entertainment

PEPPERS Westmount Mall (W), 135 St, 113
Ave (451-8022) • Every Thu (9:30pm-1:30am)
with Gord from Stonerock Productions

RATT 2-900 Students' Union Bldg, 8900 114
St, U of A Campus • Hey, What Are These
Tunes Called? Name That Tune every Tue with
Colin Krieger • Karaoke, baby: every Wed
(9pm); with Colin and Darrell

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10315-124 St (482-1600); daily (9:30pm) • Old
Strathcona, 10475-80 Ave (439-7211); every
Thu-Sat (9:30pm-1:30am) • 99 St, 63 Ave,
every Thu-Sat (9pm-1am); with Off-Key
Entertainment

SANTANNAS 182 Stony Plain Rd Every Wed
(8pm-12); with Jeannie and Bruce

**SPORTSWORLD INLINE AND ROLLER
SKATING DISCO** 13710-104 St (472-6336) •
Every Tue, Fri-Sat (7pm-midnight), Sat-Sun (1-
5pm)

YESTERDAY'S St. Albert • Every Thu
(9:30pm-2am); with Off-Key Entertainment

ZAKS ON 51ST AVENUE 10525-51 Ave (432-
5853/436-5047) • Karaoke Nights: Every Fri
(10pm-2am)



Going to the Starlite, gonna see me a lot of Peaches

QUEER **TOTALLY GAY**
LUKE FOSTER
totallygay@vancouverweekly.com

We all know that Peaches is dirty, sexual, obscene, confrontational, political and perverse. Her songs are as infectious as any venereal disease and her agenda is explicit: fuck whoever you want, however you want, whenever you want. It might not be pretty, but she's not either.

And that is precisely the appeal of Peaches. There's nothing that could be considered conventionally attractive about her. She's a nearly 40-year-old woman with hair under her arms and an ever present cameltoe who sings songs about penetration and shaking your tits and/or dicks. Yet there's something strangely arousing about her and what she does you might feel it in your head or in your pants, but every time you're exposed to Peaches, you know that it's exciting.

Which is probably why her Aug 13 show at the Starlite Room was sold out. A crowd of lesbians, gay boys, straight girls and their straight boyfriends were in attendance, all ready to be schooled by the headmistress of electro-clash.

Before the lesson began, Stinkmitt, a female duo from Toronto who specialize in raunchy raps and club tracks, warmed up the audience. Their songs were surprisingly catchy and totally danceable, and listening to them free-style about menstrual flow was the perfect primer for what was to come. After they left the stage, we were left limp waiting for Peaches. But once the Peaches and Herb classic "Reunited" came on the loudspeakers, we knew she was only a soft-rock ballad away.

WITH HER FACE COVERED in a sequined hood, Peaches began her set solo, performing the slo-jam "Tent In Your Pants" while perched atop the balcony above the venue's stage. Once the hood came off, her backing band busted out onto the stage and laid into "Fuck Or Kill." Peaches climbed off of the balcony, landing directly behind ex-Hole drummer Samantha Maloney, who was slamming away the beats. In a hot-pink spandex outfit, a bedazzled Peaches defied not only the laws of gravity but also those of proper performance by scaling the wall to the left of the stage. She made her way across the wall, holding onto the pipes for dear life, then did a wide loop of the joint. She stomped her way across

the bars and made her way back to the front by being carried by the fans who wanted nothing more than to grab a piece of her semi-exposed ass.

Once safely back onstage, the real spectacle began. Whether she was mounting a bicycle, changing in and out of her skimpy costumes, officiating an Olympic-style award ceremony, or thrusting her mic into places where mics don't belong, Peaches proved to be a consummate showman. The most entertaining bit was the giant inflatable penis that appeared onstage halfway through her set. Unfortunately, two songs later, the penis collapsed and was not responding to guitarist Radio Sloan's several attempts at CPR. "Is there a penis doctor in the house?" Peaches yelled, standing over the poor, flaccid penis before it was taken away on a stretcher.

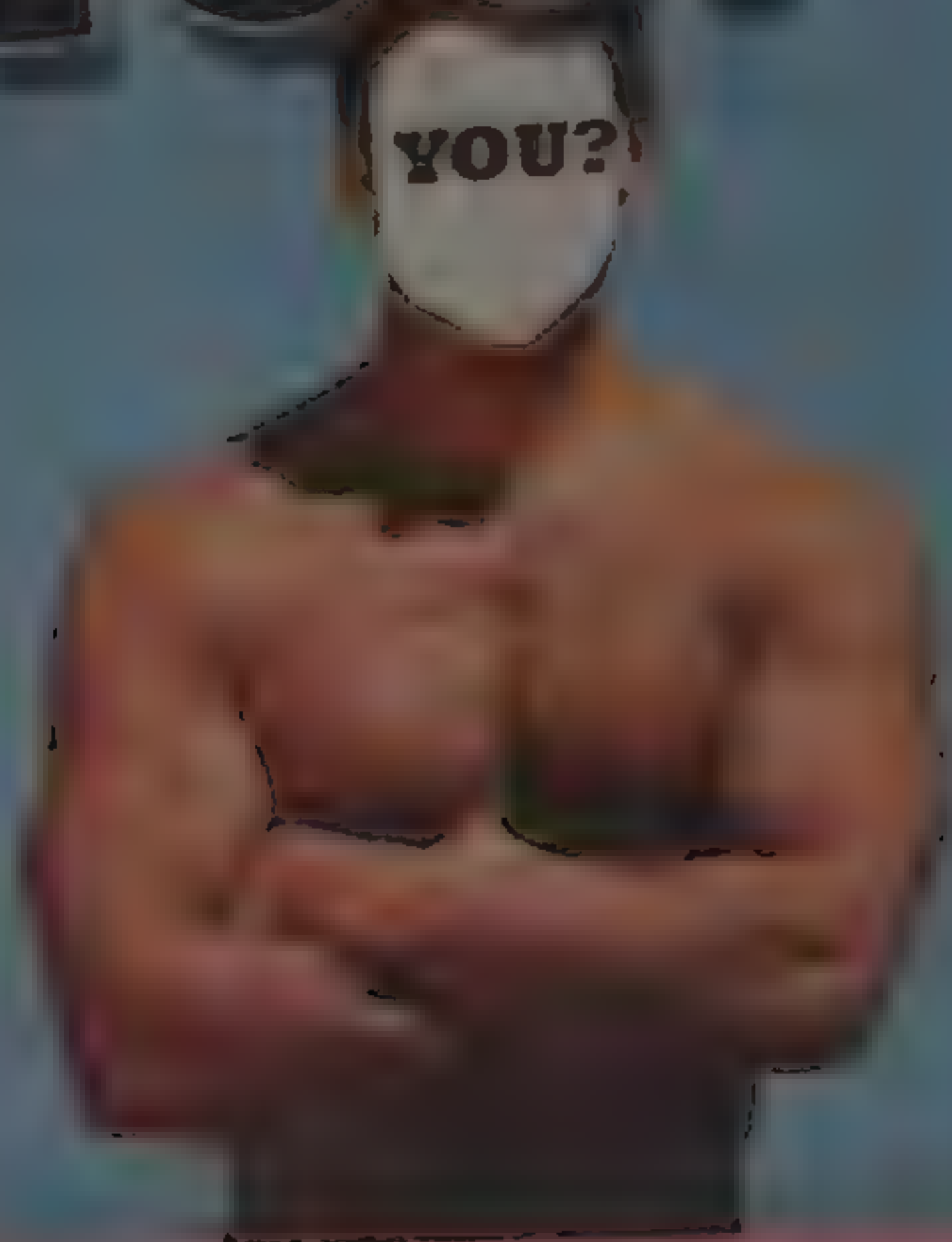
But her antics didn't take anything away from the musical portion of the evening. This was her first tour backed by a full band and her songs were louder and so much more intense than anything you've ever listened to on her records. The extra electric guitar, the keys courtesy of Le Tigre's JD Samson and the live drums, all in addition to Peaches' own pre-recorded synthesized elements, added so much more to her sound. It was a concert to see and to hear.

The majority of her set was devoted to material from her new record, *Impeach My Bush*. A kicking rendition of "Two Guys (For Every Girl)," Peaches's take on threesomes, got the crowd singing along. But it was old standbys like "Fuck The Pain Away" and "Operate" which received the most response.

By the end of her show, it was clear that Peaches is one seriously hardcore cock-rocker—in every meaning of the word. Wet and spent, Peaches left the stage in only her underwear and higher-than-thigh-high boots. But the entire crowd was wet and spent. And completely satisfied with the ultimate display of filthy, raw rock 'n' roll we all had just witnessed.

And as I was filing out of the bar, I started thinking about all of the nasty things I sang along with, all of the obscene gestures I made with my fingers, and trying to count how many times the guy (or girl?) behind me grabbed my ass. For me, the Peaches show was less a concert than it was an experience. I felt like I had been violated, only the entire time I was a willing participant. ♥

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ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

I was at an airport bookstore. A businessman near me plucked Chuck Palahniuk's *Haunted* from the shelf and said to his companion, "I've heard this book makes some people actually vomit. Listen to this passage." He read it aloud. It was about a guy who eats 10 freeze-dried turkey dinners, and dies when his stomach literally explodes. Moments after reciting this gruesome tale, the businessman collapsed and went into convulsions. I knelt down and cradled his head. A saleswoman called the paramedics, and 15 minutes later he was fine. "That never happened to me before," he said. "I don't have epilepsy. It must have been a reaction to what I read." The moral of the story, Aries: words will have potent effects on you in the coming days. You should therefore surround yourself not with Palahniuk-type curses but with good news and uplifting stories and people who dispense articulate blessings.

TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

I heard a guy on the radio tell the following story. He and his wife stopped to enjoy a sunset. After a few minutes, they noticed that its breathtaking beauty remained static; the scene wasn't evolving. Upon further investigation, they registered the embarrassing fact that they had actually been admiring an image on a billboard. Make sure a similar event doesn't happen to you, Taurus. Avoid getting hooked on substitutes, stand-ins or simulacra. Insist on the real thing.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

In her song "Deeper Well," Emmylou Harris says she's "looking for the water from a deeper well." Make that your assignment, Gemini. And if you're feeling brave, extend your search to an even more challenging quest: what Harris refers to as searching for a "holier grail." According to my reading of the omens, your biggest, brightest dream isn't as big and bright as it could be. Raise your standards.

CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

The omens suggest that you're most likely to be happy and healthy in the coming weeks if you treat the whole world as your classroom. Thank God, then, that you won't suffer anytime soon from sophophobia (a fear of learning) or optophobia (fear of opening one's eyes). It's my duty to inform you, however, that you could experience politicophobia (fear of politicians) or myxophobia (fear of slime). Ironically, that would be quite lucky, because it's crucial that you avoid manipulative power-brokers and mud-slinging know-it-alls who might confuse you about the educational experiences you need to pursue.

LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

"Raising kids is like making pancakes," muses Brian Copeland in his show *Not a Genuine Black Man*. "You always mess up the first one." A similar idea might apply to a certain multi-pronged project you've been working on, Leo. I'm not saying you should abandon or throw away your initial effort. On the contrary, like rookie parents whose inexperience has slightly tweaked their first-born, you should be thorough in trying to undo your mistakes. But I also suggest that you

immediately get started on the next creation in the series, being sure you've learned all you can from the consequences of your earlier ignorance.

VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

My old philosophy professor Norman O Brown would periodically interrupt his lectures, tilt his head upward as if tuning into the whisper of some heavenly voice, and announce in a mischievous tone, "It's time for your irregular reminder: we're already living after the end of the world. No need to fret anymore." The implication was that the worst had already happened. We had already lost most of the cultural riches that had given humans meaning for centuries. All that was going to be taken from us had already been taken. On the bright side, that meant we were utterly free to reinvent ourselves. Use these ideas as seeds for your meditations, Virgo. You can apply them to both your personal life and the world at large.

LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

Novelist Jeanette Winterson told a TV interviewer about her mother's strongest belief: "You can be happy, or else you can be like normal people." This idea applies to you right now, Libra—maybe more than you realize. From what I can tell, you're at a crossroads in your relationship with happiness. You could go either way, and it's mostly up to you: Will you tame your urges for wild joy, repress your instincts to follow your lyrically crazy heart, and surrender to the dull insanity of the maddening crowd? Or would you prefer the scarier, more eccentric and action-packed route that will constantly push you to enlarge your capacity to feel good?

SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

Sculptor Luis Jimenez was renowned for making large pieces with political themes that incited controversy. In "The Barfly," created during the Vietnam War, he depicted the Statue of Liberty as a drunken floozy. "Vaquero" shows a Mexican cowboy riding a bucking stallion and waving a gun. It not only satirizes the pretentious statues of military leaders on horses that are often found in parks; it's also a reminder that the original cowboys of the American West were Mexicans. "It's not my job to censor myself," Jimenez said. "An artist's job is to constantly test the boundaries." Whether or not you're an artist yourself, Scorpio, your next assignment is aligned with Jimenez's approach: don't censor yourself as you test the boundaries.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

There are now as many people working at Wal-Mart stores as there are high-school teachers. Can anything be done to change this depressing state of affairs? Well, it so happens that the time is ripe for you Sagittarians to cultivate your skill at sharing what you know. It's also an excellent phase to cultivate your ability to inspire and energize your fellow humans. So if just one per cent of you use this pregnant moment as a springboard to launch careers as high-school educators, Wal-Mart employees would no longer outnumber you and your heroic colleagues.

CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

Philosopher Robert Anton Wilson said that "the universe acts like a chess game in which the player on the other side remains invisible to us. By analyzing the moves, we

can form an image of the intellect behind them." The coming weeks will be an excellent time for you to gain insights into that other chess player, Capricorn. You will have an extraordinary capacity for setting aside your own subjective mind-chatter and seeing the objective truth. You'll also be more skilled than usual at understanding what's going on in the shadows and darkness. The hidden world is whispering secrets in codes you can crack.

AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

It's time for you to fall in love, Aquarius—though not necessarily with a person. You could swoon with infatuation for a place where your heart feels free, for example. You could dive into new music that liberates you from your past, or give yourself with abandon to a fascinating task that brings out the best in you. You might lose your heart to a mind-expanding mentor, a mysterious animal, or a thrilling fight for justice. It really doesn't matter exactly how or what you fall in love with, Aquarius, as long as it incites you to break open the doors of perception.

PISCES (FEB 19 - MAR 20)

Last week's symbol was a boot kicking with futility at a closed door that was locked in response to your kicking; it bespoke a frustrated strength that provoked even greater resistance. This week's symbol will be dramatically different: bare feet climbing a rope ladder to a dance floor on a roof where a telescope is trained on the planet Jupiter. In this new phase, there will still be obstacles for you to overcome. But the emphasis will be on craft and agility rather than force and instinct. ♠

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WANTED: male (18-24) actor for short film
Call 423-4914.

Music photographer seeking solo artists to build portfolio on a time for prints basis. www.davenoel.com

Poetry by New Canadians, a contest to feature and encourage writing by newcomers. Submission deadline: **Sept 30, 2006**. The contest is open to adult immigrant men/women, residents of Edmonton. e-mail: leocampos@aol.com, ph 474-6058.

Planet Ze Design Centre seeks models, actors, singers, dancers, visual artists, performing artists and other talents in regards to fashion week. Call 428-3499 for info.

ART XPRESSED! Weeklong art camps for creative

kids at Harcourt House. For more info call: 426-4180 or see <http://harcourthouse.ab.ca>

Justice and Fair Trade in St. Albert: Call for Fair Trade vendors/groups. Ph: 459-5511.

Call for Alberta Artists for the Open Art Competition at the Little Church Gallery. **Deadline: Aug. 23.** Ph 962-0664 or e-mail to alliedac@shaw.ca or visit www.members.shaw.ca/alliedac.

Cortex, a visual art show for the Edmonton Poetry Festival is seeking poets and visual artists. Call Philip 437-5014, e-mail: satorrey@shaw.ca.

Call to Enter: **ArtHub Studio Gallery** features guest artists. Incl: Proposal; 10 slides/photos; CV; Artist statement. For info Ph Tim 423-2966.

MUSICIANS

Auditions for new members for the **Richard Eaton Singers' 2006/2007 season. August 30 (7pm)**, in Rm 1-29, Fine Arts Building, U of A. For info/audition arrangements contact the Richard Eaton Singers office 428-3737 (weekdays afternoons), e-mail: info@richardeatonsingers.com

Funk/jazz trio seeking keyboard, horns, additional percussion, female vocalist, personality and appearance important, leave message 473-1610.

Electric bassist available for employment. Young, neat appearance, very experienced, prof. gear. All styles of music. Rod 288-5345.

Country Female singer/songwriter wanting country musician's asap. www.ambreyhaydey.com, 780-914-9813

Lead singer seeking Bassist, Drummer and Guitarist for hard rock/heavymetal band. Crack Daddy Princess. Loyal and hardworking only! Contact Justin 1-780-352-3965 or justinlc@telus.net

Former **lead singer** of the Las Vegas Crypt Keepers **looking for serious band to perform some covers and originals.** Contact Paul at (780) 634-9553.

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Jazz/funk trio needs additional percussion, horns, keys, female vocalist (appearance and personality important). Leave message 473-0610.

VOLUNTEER

SEEKING musicians, literary and visual artists for the U of A Hospital's **Artist on the Walls** volunteer program. Must have formal experience/training and be able to commit 2-3 hrs/wk for 6 consecutive months. For information or to book an interview, please call 407-8428.

Volunteer Opportunity-Provincial Health Ethics Network. Full details about PHEN, please visit: www.phen.ab.ca / Fax: 447-1181.

LATITUDE 53 is looking for volunteers for upcoming bingos on **August 28.** Contact lisa.tougas@latitude53.org or Ph 423-5353. Check www.latitude53.org/opportunities/volunteer.html

Volunteer at Strathcona Place Senior Citizen Centre: **Volunteer Pottery Instructor.** Ph Rita Mittelsteadt, 433-5807.

Volunteer at the Hispanic Arts Society's **Fuego Latino Gala** at the Winspear, **Sat, Aug. 19.** Info at www.hispanicarts.com, or at the office 9704-27 Ave, Unit 211.

Become a friend to a NEW Canadian. Dulari at 474-8445 or www.eisa-edmonton.org

Red Cross is seeking energetic, caring & committed community members to become **Volunteer Prevention Educators** for its **RespectED: Violence and Abuse Prevention** program. Receive an intensive 10-day relationship violence prevention training session this fall. Trained volunteers are certified to deliver Relationship Violence Prevention presentations. Contact Daanna Key (780) 423-2680, E: daanna.key@redcross.ca. www.redcross.ca

Volunteer in Strathcona Place Senior Citizen Centre Dining Room, Ph Terrie Shaw, 433-5808.

Volunteer to Strathcona Place Senior Citizen Centre Outreach Program. Ph Jo Royal 433-5808.

Donate unwanted items to the Strathcona Place Senior Centre for the Falling Leaves Bazaar: Sat, Sept. 30. No clothes or large appliances. 10831 University Ave (9am-4pm)

Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A seeks individuals suffering from **SOCIAL PHOBIA** for research study. Ph 407-3221. Reimbursement.

Brain Neurobiology Research Program at U of A seeks individuals suffering from **POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION** for research study. Ph 407-3906. Reimbursement provided.

Donate items to Change For Children. DVD player; Mini DV Camera; Photo/art frames; LCD Projector; digital camera; External hard-drives; office supplies; photocopier & printer; lap top computer (minimum 512mb/1GHZ); VCR player; TV with DVD connections; book shelves and Plants. Change For Children, 2nd Flr, 10808-124 St, (780) 448-1505.

Volunteers needed to **teach English as a Second Language** to newcomers during the summer. Morning or afternoons at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. Call Marty at 423-9516.

Old Strathcona Youth Society: Looking for volunteers aged 21+ interested in working with high-risk youth, drop-in setting. Ph Naomi 496-5947, e-mail: osyc@telus.net

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Mentors for Children/Youth. Supportive adult role

models needed to share time and interests with kids in care. Evening or weekend placements, 2-3 hrs/wk. Various locations. Lily @ 432-1137, ext. 357.

Human Rights City Edmonton: Take part in a new survey: www.johnhumphreycentre.org

CPAWS Edmonton Boreal Education: Volunteer Presenters needed. Contact CPAWS Ed. Team at education@cpaws-edmonton.org for info.

Help weed and transplant for Edmonton Naturalization Group. Ph 468-7570, e-mail: cad@transcana.com for info.

Living Positive, looking for volunteers to help with programs and fundraising activities. Ph 488-5768, e-mail: info@edmlivingpositive.ca for info.

Become a distress line volunteer. Training classes begin in Sept or Nov. Ph The Support Network, 732-6648. www.thesupportnetwork.com

Assist new immigrants on a bus trip to a grocery store to shop for essentials. Ph Judy 424-3545, ext. 249.

Literacy Tutors Needed. Assist adults with developmental disabilities to acquire basic reading and writing skills. Support provided, 1-2hrs/wk. Various locations. Lily @ 432-1137, ext. 357.

Teach classroom English to adult immigrants. Flexible daytime, weekdays 3-4hrs/wk. Ph Judy 424-3545, ext. 249.

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Ah ... the ol' ball-gag at Starbucks gag

ADVICE ALT.SEX.COLUMN

ANDREA WEMERSON
altsex@altsexcolumn.com

DEAR ANDREA:

I've found myself a femmy boy who's willing—nay, enthusiastically prepared—to wear green eyeshadow in public. This is delicious. However, we live in Colorado Springs, which is for its size a wealthy and well-educated town, but also headquarters for Focus on the Family, New Life Church, Will Perkins, Ft Carson, NORAD and the Air Force Academy. One of my femmy-boy friends was recently chased down an alley downtown by some of the local military simians for the apparently gender-treacherous crime of wearing a top hat. It was lucky for him he knew the area well and wasn't nearly as plastered as they were.

My two questions about the eyeshadow thing are these: firstly—and I understand if you're not able to answer because you don't live here—if we go on a date while he's wearing it, what do you think our chances are of finishing the evening without getting the shit beaten out of us? And secondly, what's your opinion on where one should put one's feet while treading the fine line between keeping yourself safe and taking a stand for the right to do what you want with your body if it's not hurting anyone else?

I guess the question is along the same lines as, how do you feel about him wearing a ball-gag and leash to the local Starbucks? Eyeshadow is just a less overtly

sexual signal. Well ... to some people. Not to me.

LOVE, DON'T KICK ME

DEAR KICK:

Gotcha. And no, I surely do not live there, nor would I. But we did blow out a tire there on a cross-country trip once and got stranded for a couple days. Pretty town. Really nice park. I knew all that stuff (Air Force, antigay groups and et cetera) was there but you can't tell by visiting—it's not like there are giant "FAGS GO HOME" banners flying over main street or anything. But would I, were I a guy, dress up in my gayest glad-rags and sashay down the same main drag in a pair of darling red wedge espadrilles and a panty-girdle? I would not. I suspect you would not, either, were you a guy (you're not, right?). It would be no safer for you to accompany your new girly-boy while he did it, either. There's sticking up for your inalienable right to be a weirdo, and there's stupidity. I draw the line at stupidity in any other context, so why would I make an exception for this one?

There was a time in the late '80s and early '90s when the all the cool kids were making a spectacle of themselves in the name of political action. Visibility, I think we called it. All you had to do was print up some T-shirts or stickers and show up en masse where you weren't expected and you got to feel all brave and thrillingly transgressive and challenging to heterosexual hegemony and stuff. It was great. It was also kind of a fake—when you're surrounded by a few dozen or a hundred

or a thousand of your closest friends and you're in San Francisco or New York or Washington—not Jakarta or Beijing or rural Rwanda—you're pretty safe. Even if the cops get you you're going to be cited and set free, not found bound and beheaded in a ditch. That doesn't mean that nothing we do here is dangerous, though, and unfortunately walking certain streets in a state of visible gender ambiguity can still get you kicked in the face.

There is no set point on the continuum from "safe but stifled" to "kick me" that I can recommend you find and cleave to, never again to stray. I do not think it would be very smart to dress your boy up and parade him around near the base at bar-closing on a Saturday night; nor do I think those of us who fail to conform in every particular to local community standards for gender performance need cower at home forever for fear of attracting a disapproving glance. Somewhere between "don't frighten the horses" and "fuck 'em if they can't take a joke" lies the perfect level of public self-expression for you two as individuals of your particular place and time. Find it. Also consider finding some fellow gender traitors with whom to make your scene, even if that scene is no more transgressive than going out for fish and chips and the late showing of *Snakes On A Plane*. I think you'll be OK. I wouldn't recommend the Starbucks/ball-gag excursion but that's because it's in bad taste, not because it could get you killed. You'll have to use your common sense. If you haven't got any, I really do think you'd better stay home.

LOVE, ANDREA

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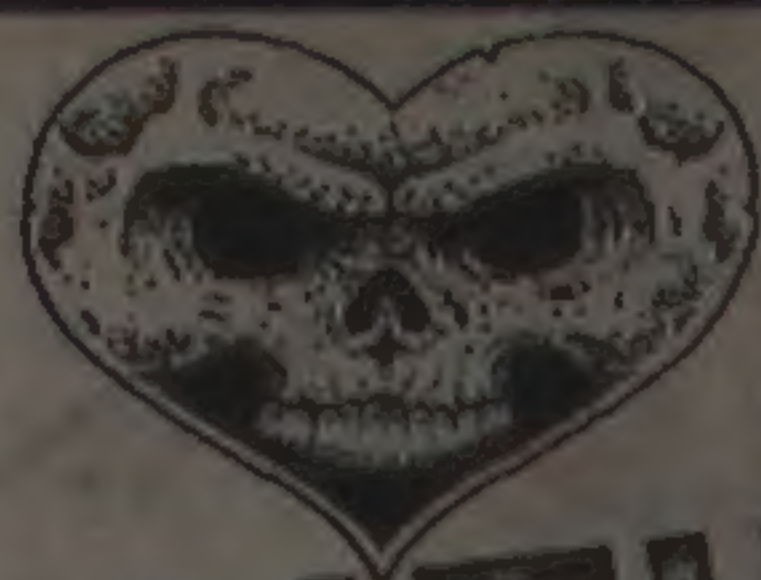


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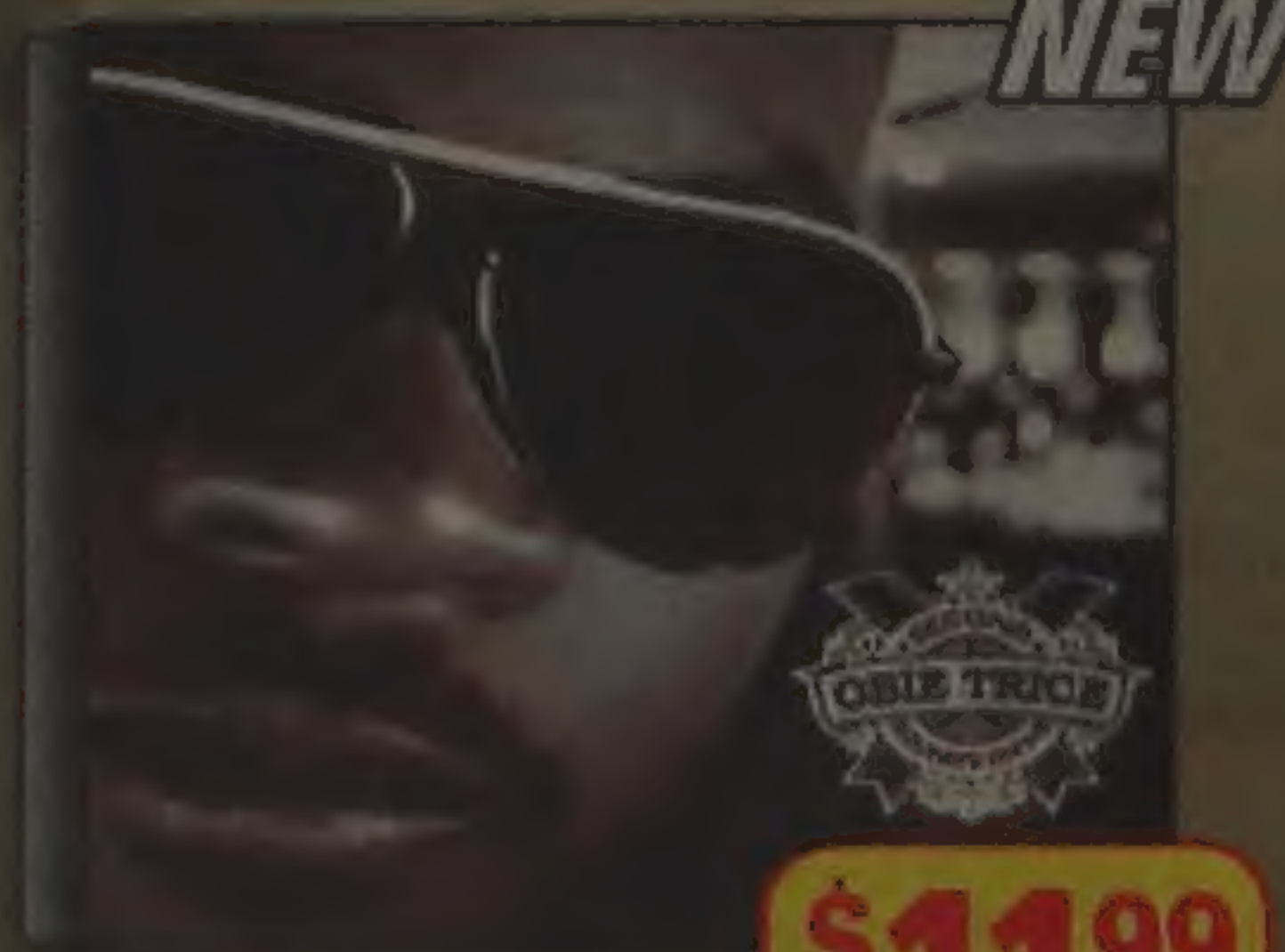
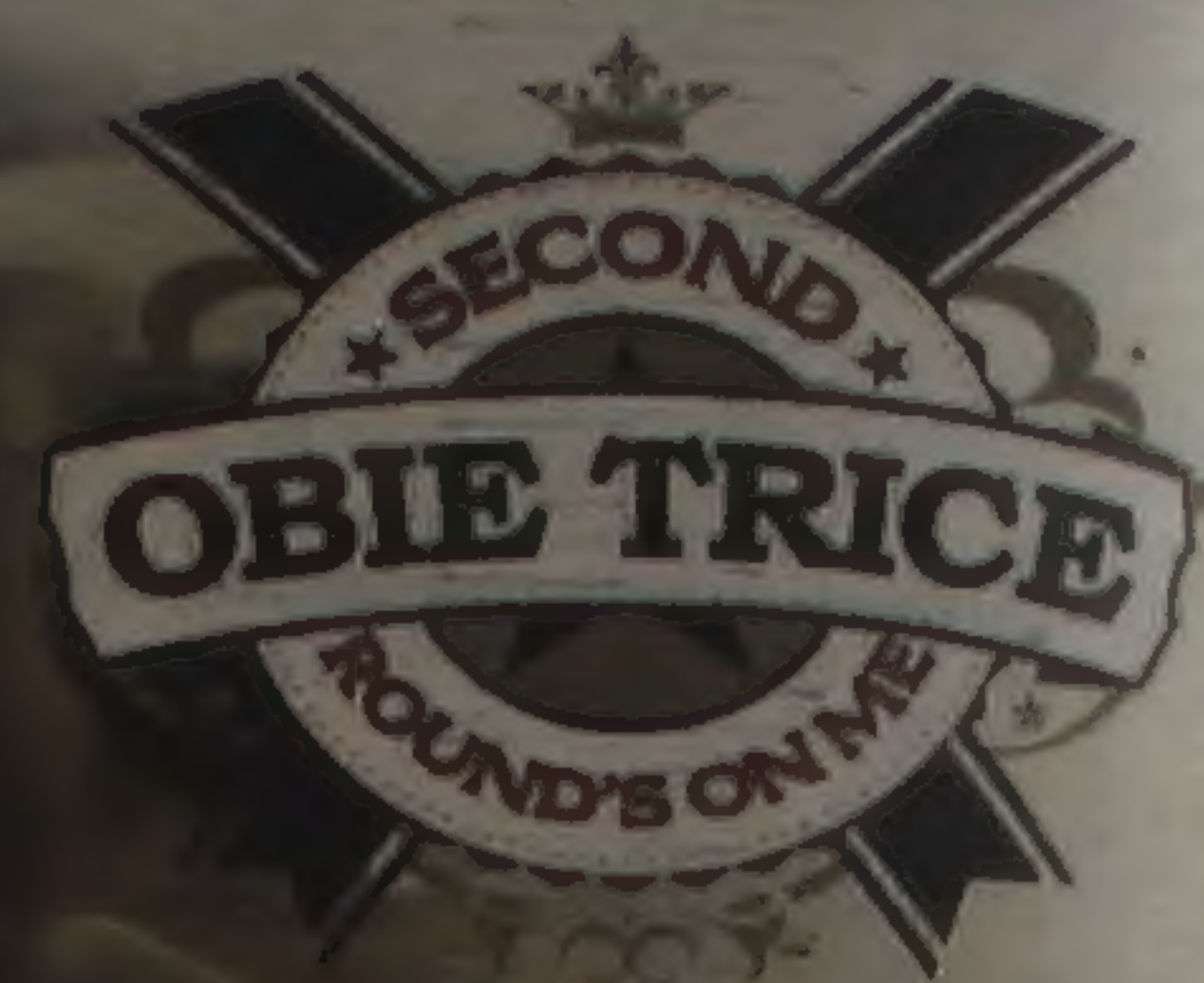
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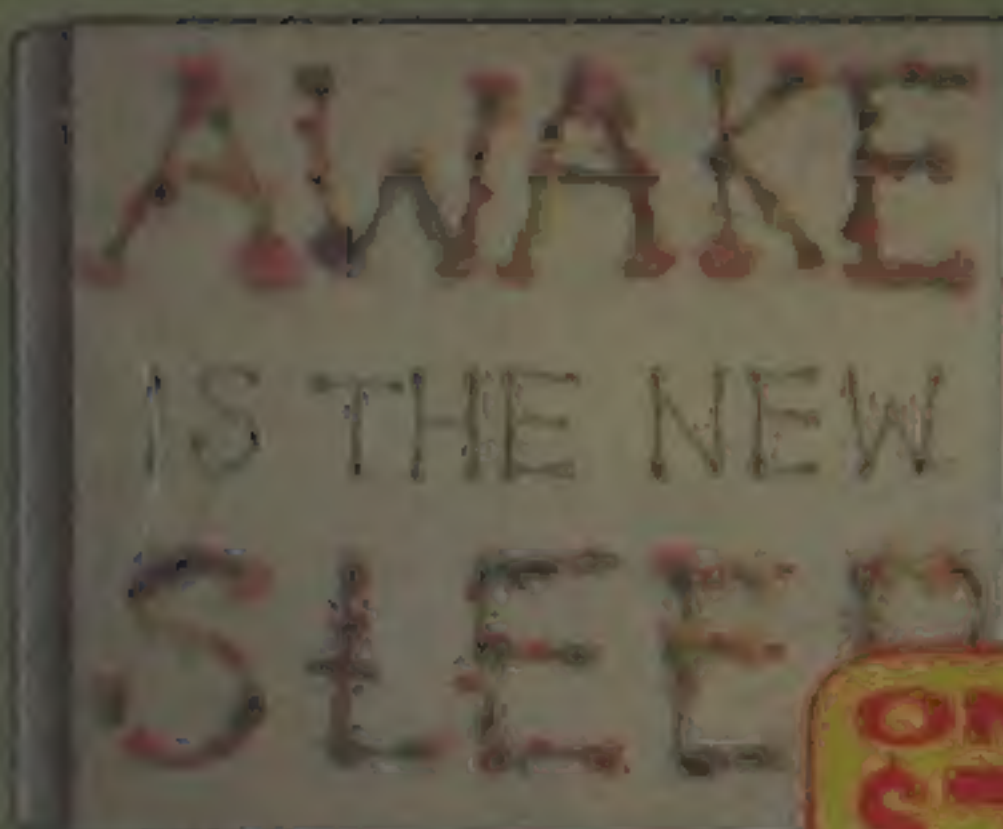
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